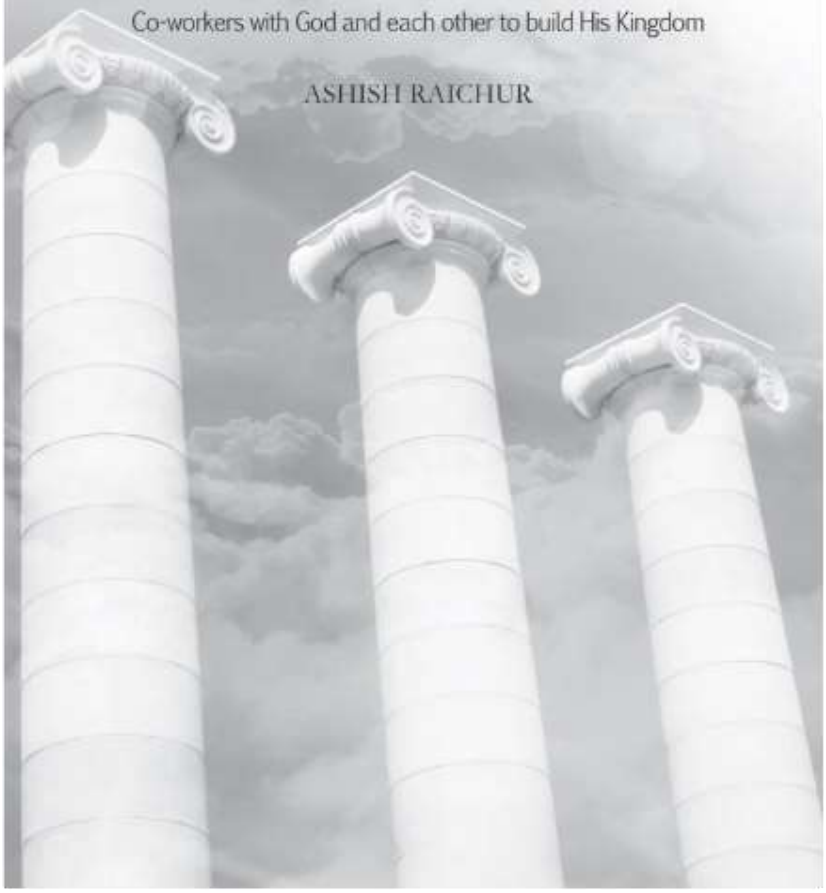
Kingdom Builders

Co-workers with God and each other to build His Kingdom

ASHISH RAICHUR



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ANCIENT OF DAYS

Written By: Gary Edward Sadler, Jamie Harvill

Blessing and honor, glory and power
Be unto the Ancient of Days
From every nation, all of creation
Bow before the Ancient of Days

Every tongue in heaven and earth shall declare Your glory
Every knee will bow at Your throne in worship
You will be exalted, oh God
And Your kingdom will not pass away
Oh, Ancient of Days Oh, Ancient of Days

Your kingdom shall reign over all the earth
Sing to the ancient of days
For none can compare to your matchless worth
Sing to the ancient of days

KINGDOM BUILDERS

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INTRODUCTION

It is an awesome thought to consider that God has called us to be co-workers together with Him. Our call is to be builders of His Kingdom.

What is Kingdom building? What does it take to be a Kingdom builder, someone who co-labors with God to build His Kingdom? Since all of us are co-laboring with God, this also means, that we co-labor with each other to build His Kingdom. How do we do this given our differences, our personal insecurities, flaws, and weaknesses?

With a quick introduction to the Kingdom of God, we begin this journey of becoming Kingdom builders, starting first at a personal level—with our hearts. We discover what it means to be a co-worker with the King and how to develop the heart of a Kingdom builder. We cannot be true Kingdom builders if we do not have the heart to be one. We must also learn to yield to the Spirit of God who directs the work of the Kingdom.

We then explore how God takes each one of us individually to fulfill His visions and dreams for Kingdom expansion.

Kingdom building is about building people, shaping hearts, and lives. This is very different from developing an organization or constructing a building. We build people by the Spirit, and we learn simple keys to do so.

Dreams and visions in God's Kingdom are interlinked. To fulfill the dream in my heart, often God will call me to step in and serve in the dream God has put in your heart. In the process, what is in my heart will be fulfilled. We learn how to partner in Kingdom building, co-laboring, and working together.

We discuss our collective responsibility as Kingdom builders toward the community or city in which we live.

We then remind ourselves of our Kingdom responsibility toward the next generation, of leaving behind a legacy and ensuring that the work of the Kingdom continues stronger with each coming generation.

If all work as Kingdom builders, we will see a radical shift in the spiritual dynamics within the Body of Christ in any city, region, and nation!

Let us seek first His Kingdom. Together let us build His Kingdom. Let us be Kingdom builders! Thy Kingdom come!

Blessings!
Ashish Raichur

1. THE KINGDOM AND THE CHURCH

Matthew 16:18-19
18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.
19 And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

The Kingdom Of God

Psalm 24:10
Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, He is the King of glory. Selah

God is King. His Kingdom is His rule and dominion. It is the place of His reign. It is where His Lordship extends and where His power and influence prevail. It is the place where His will is done, and His purposes are established. His Kingdom rules over all! "*The LORD has established His throne in heaven, And His kingdom rules over all*" (Psalm 103:19).

The Lord Jesus introduced the Kingdom into our realm. He came announcing, *"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"* (Matthew 4:17). He came to bring us into the Kingdom and the Kingdom into us. We are delivered from the powers of darkness and translated into the Kingdom of Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:13). His Kingdom is established within our hearts and lives (Luke 17:21). As people adopted into God's family, we are called, *"heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ"* (Romans 8:17). His rule and dominion extend in our lives and into all that we do. We are called sons of the Kingdom (Matthew 13:38). The Kingdom of God is pervasive and is to be extended into all spheres of human life (Matthew 13:31-33).

There will come a time when He will establish a literal Kingdom on this earth. "*And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end*" (Luke 1:33). "*...the government will be upon His shoulder ... of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever*" (Isaiah 9:6-7). He will hand over the administration of this Kingdom to His people and the saints will possess the Kingdom (Daniel 7:22,27). This is what God planned even before time began. The saints will be invited to "*inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world*" (Matthew 25:34). In view of this "*since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear*" (Hebrews 12:28).

In the New Testament we have the terms "*Kingdom of God*" and "*Kingdom of heaven*"

used often. The Kingdom of God describes whose Kingdom it is—God's Kingdom. The Kingdom of heaven describes where this Kingdom originates from—a realm outside this earthly realm, a spiritual realm called heaven. Jesus said, "*My kingdom is not of this world*" (John 18:36).

The Kingdom Of God And The Church

Matthew 16:18-19
18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.
19 And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

In this age, the Kingdom of God, in its spiritual form (expression) is being administered and released on the earth through the Church, the Body of Christ. The Church is part of the Kingdom of God and represents God's Kingdom here on earth. The Church is called to pray: "*Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven*" (Matthew 6:10). The Church has been vested with Kingdom authority to enforce what the King desires on this earth. The Church has been empowered to overthrow the "*gates of hell*," which represent centers of demonic domination on the earth. We are here to proclaim the Gospel of the Kingdom, as Jesus did (Acts 8:12; Acts 14:22; Acts 19:8; Acts 20:25; Acts 28:23,31). We teach the Kingdom of God, learn to live according to Kingdom thinking (mindset), Kingdom culture, and grow in Kingdom lifestyle.

The Natural Dimension Of The Church

The Church is a spiritual body of all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. The spiritual body, the Church, has its natural expression in people who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb "out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation." As believers we have our individual preferences, natural cultures, belong to different local churches, and have many varied expressions of God's working among us. These natural differences often become reasons for separation among us, even though we are part of one Body and belong to the same Kingdom of God. These reasons for separation often result in division amongst us, causing the Church to be a divided house and a divided Kingdom.

The purpose of this teaching on "Kingdom builders" is to help us rise above the things that separate us and work together for the establishing of God's Kingdom.

Reflection

1. Do you normally view things from the perspective of the Kingdom of God, in your daily life and ministry?
2. How would things change in the way you live life and do ministry if you did everything from the perspective of the Kingdom of God? That is, in everything, you represent the Kingdom of God and work for the expansion of God's Kingdom in the hearts and lives of people.
3. In your consideration, what would be more important, an individual's personal culture and preference or the culture, lifestyle, and values taught by the Kingdom of God?

For a thorough study on the Kingdom of God, please read the free APC book: "The Kingdom of God."

Majesty

Written by: Jack W. Hayford

Majesty Worship His majesty
Unto Jesus be all glory, Honor and praise

Majesty Kingdom authority
Flows from His throne Unto His own
His anthem raise

So exalt, lift up on high
The name of Jesus Magnify,
come glorify Christ Jesus the King

Majesty Worship His majesty
Jesus who died, now glorified King of all kings

2. CHRIST—THE KING OF THE KINGDOM

1 Timothy 6:15-16
15 . . . He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords,
16 who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen.

The Apostle Paul was mightily used by God to establish and expand the Kingdom of God. He was a true Kingdom builder, one whose heart was set on glorifying Christ and seeing His Kingdom established in the lives of people. In his epistles, Paul shares what it takes to be a true Kingdom builder. We begin with one such passage.

1 Corinthians 3:6,9–11
6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.
9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building.
10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it.
11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

We see several important things here:

- We are co-workers with the King "*we are God's fellow workers*..." (Vs 9). The fact that we are co-workers with the King, is what makes us Kingdom builders. We are working with Him to build His Kingdom.
- Kingdom Building is about building people "… *you are God's field, you are God's building*" (Vs 9).
- Kingdom Building is about partnership, about working together (Vs 6,9-10). "*I planted, Apollos watered*." "*I laid the foundation, and another builds on it.*"
- God uses one man to sow, another man to water, and yet another man to reap. God uses one man to lay the foundation and another man to build on it, and yet another man to take it further. Each one's work, regardless of what it is, is equally important. Everyone is equally important.
- Kingdom Building is about Christ (Vs 11). Christ is the foundation, the starting point.

Our Relationship With The King Is Of Prime Importance

1 Corinthians 3:11
For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

In Kingdom building, we must always remember that Christ is the Foundation, the Head, and the Preeminent One.

To be a Kingdom builder—our relationship with the King is important. Everything begins with Him.

Too many of us ministers have become preoccupied with our relationship with a "denomination," a "network of ministers," a "spiritual covering," a "ministerial association," or a "fellowship of ministers," while neglecting something of far greater importance—the depth of our personal relationship with the King. No "denomination," "network of ministers," "spiritual covering," "ministerial association," or "fellowship of ministers" can replace our personal relationship with the King.

While it is important to have a healthy relationship with fellow ministers, what really qualifies us to be a Kingdom builder is our relationship with the King.

Colossians 1:16–18
16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.
17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.
18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

In the Kingdom and in Kingdom building, Christ is preeminent.

In Kingdom Building, we must remember that all things are by Him, for Him, and through Him. And in all things, He must be preeminent, the number One.

If Christ is not preeminent in what we do, then the work we do cannot be considered building Christ's Kingdom.

If at the end of my preaching, people get more excited about me than with God and His Word, then my preaching has not served in truly building the Kingdom. I have not served as a Kingdom builder.

The Kingdom Is Neither Mine Nor Yours But His

Matthew 6:10
Your Kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

This is His Kingdom. It is not about "my ministry," "my church," "your ministry," or "your church." All that we have and all that we do is His! Together we are building His Kingdom.

Our desire should be to see His Kingdom come. Too many of us are so caught up in seeing "my ministry come" and this is misplaced focus.

We are here to do what He wants done on the earth. God in heaven expresses His will. He looks to His people on earth to execute it.

We Must Seek To Glorify God Alone

Matthew 6:13b
…For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

All of the glory belongs to God alone.

As Kingdom builders our purpose is clear, that is to glorify God alone. We should not desire any glory—not even a small portion of the glory for ourselves.

John 7:18
He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him.

It is only when we truly seek to glorify God, will our hearts be pure, and no unrighteousness be found in us.

Too often, our hearts are tainted with a mixture of giving most of the glory to God but desiring a part of the glory for ourselves. We need to move away from this to a place where we give all the glory to the Lord. You may have heard it said before, "a church without mixture, will have the Spirit without measure."

Isaiah 42:8
I am the Lord, that is My name; and My glory I will not give to another, nor my praise to carved images.

God is a Jealous God in that He will not tolerate His glory being given to anyone else (Exodus 20:5; Exodus 34:14). Why is it then that we, ministers of His, do not hesitate to draw attention to ourselves, as though it was because of our own power, our prayer, or our virtue that wonderful things happen? Our words, our slick advertising, our body language, our ministry reports, and our testimonies are all geared to having the eyes of people fixed on us. We feel threatened if people look elsewhere even for a moment! This is unlike Peter and John who when the lame man was healed spoke to the crowds and said, "…*Why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk*?" (Acts 3:12). They then pointed people to the living God and His Son Jesus Christ.

John 5:41
I do not receive honor from men.

We need to come to a place before God, where we will not desire honor from men. Our hearts must be totally void of any desire for praise from man. This is what makes a true Kingdom builder.

John 8:54a
Jesus answered, "If I honor Myself, my honor is nothing …

Honor that is self-bestowed is not true honor and is devoid of any value.

John 5:44
How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God?

As Kingdom builders we need to come to a place where we no longer desire honor from man, but desire only the honor from God. When we live only for the applause of heaven, not desiring the accolades of men, it is then that we are truly seeking to glorify God.

It was the Pharisees and hypocrites who did their works to be seen of men, thereby receiving the praises of men as their reward. Jesus warned us against such motives, instructing us to choose instead to be seen by God and receiving our reward from God above (Matthew 6:1–6; Matthew 23:5).

John 12:42-43
42 Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue;
43 for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

The real test of where our hearts are with regard to the praises of men and commendation from God lies in what we choose to do in situations where we risk losing out on acceptance by man and may face rejection instead. Will we, in such situations, still choose the "praise of God" instead of the "praise of men?"

Galatians 1:10
For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.

You cannot be a servant of God if you become a pleaser of men.

1 Thessalonians 2:4–6a
4 But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts.
5 For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness—God is

witness.
6a Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others …

The motivation of our hearts as we preach, teach, and minister should always be to please God and not men. If what we do is angled in such a way that we get glory from man, then the motivation of our hearts is not pure.

Psalm 115:1
Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to Your name give glory, because of Your mercy, because of Your truth.

This is a prayer that we can pray often that will help keep our hearts pure and set in the right direction.

Our Authority On The Earth Is Dependent On Our Submission To The King

James 4:7
Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

Our authority on the earth is effective only to the extent that we are in submission to the King. We are to first submit to God, and then resist the devil.

There were two trees in the Garden. By eating of one tree, man was empowered to live a long life. By not eating of the other tree, man was empowered to exercise dominion on the earth. The day he ate of the tree that he was not supposed to eat of, he lost his dominion on the earth. He also lost access to the tree of life.

Our obedience and submission to God are keys to Kingdom authority.
Spiritual authority is simple, His dominion in me, determines His dominion through me.

To the extent He reigns in me, to that extent He can reign through me.

When you are under authority, you can exert the authority you are submitted to.

Let Us Not Glory In Man

1 Corinthians 1:11-13
11 For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you.
12 Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ."
13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?
1 Corinthians 3:21
Therefore let no one boast in men. For all things are yours …

1 Corinthians 4:6
Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other.

While we must respect and honor those in Christian leadership, we must be careful not to become "*puffed up on behalf of one against another*."

It is when we elevate man, or an individual, beyond their rightful place that we begin to produce divisions and schisms in the Kingdom. We then cease to be Kingdom builders and instead become Kingdom dividers.

When you elevate yourself—thinking that things are happening because of you or what you are doing, you are glorying in man.

When you elevate yourself—thinking that you are more spiritual, more sensitive to God, more prayerful, more anointed than the other, you are glorying in man.

We Are Accountable To The Lord Who Will Judge All Things

1 Corinthians 4:3–5
3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself.
4 For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord.
5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.

2 Corinthians 5:9–11
9 Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.
10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.
11 Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences.

While it is important to be accountable to those whom the Lord has placed around us, it is even more important to be accountable to God. Ultimately, we are accountable to the Lord who will judge all things.

Accountability is, simply put, being:

1. True to God,
2. True to ourselves,
3. True to our family,
4. True to those we serve and
5. True to those who watch over our lives.

If we fail in the first two, then it is very likely that we will not hesitate in failing in the other three.

We will be judged, not by the magnitude of what we accomplished, but for the motives with which we did them (1 Corinthians 4:5).

We will be judged not for the greatness of the exploits we have done, but for our obedience to the Father's will (Matthew 7:21–23).

We will be judged not by the significance of our calling or gifting, but for the faithfulness with which we carried them out (Matthew 25:21).

Revelation 3:1-2
1 And to the angel of the church in Sardis write, 'These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: "I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.
2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God.

It is possible to have a reputation among men that we are "alive," but be found "dead" in God's estimation.

It is possible to be considered "anointed" among men, but have God disappointed with us.

Our desire should be that our work and ministry be perfect before God.

Develop The Heart Of A Kingdom Builder

- ✓ The heart of a Kingdom builder is a heart that is totally devoted to Christ the King.
- ✓ The heart of a Kingdom builder is a heart that seeks to glorify Christ alone.
- ✓ The heart of a Kingdom builder is a heart that does not receive honor from man.
- ✓ The heart of a Kingdom builder is a heart that does not glory in man.
- ✓ The heart of a Kingdom builder is a heart that is pure in its motives.

Pray that God would create in you the heart of a Kingdom builder. This is where all Kingdom building begins. "Lord, give me the heart of a Kingdom builder."

Reflection

1. In Kingdom building, it is very easy to get absorbed in doing the work of building the

Kingdom that we forget to constantly deepen our relationship with the King. What are things you do regularly to ensure that you constantly deepen your relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ?

2. It is only when we seek to glorify God alone that our hearts are pure, and no unrighteousness is in us. In all sincerity, in the ministry that you do, do you seek to glorify God alone? Are you offended when you go unrecognized, unappreciated, and without applause?
3. Do you draw your identity from or take pride in your association with any minister or ministry, when interacting with other ministers of God? Would you consider this being puffed up on behalf of one against another?

For further study on dealing with root issues of self, lust, pride, and jealousy in the life of a servant of God, please review the free APC book: "Laying the Axe to the Root."

All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name!

Written by: Edward Perronet

All hail the power of Jesus' Name!
Let angels prostrate fall;
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown Him Lord of all!

Ye chosen seed of Israel's race,
Ye ransomed from the fall,
Hail Him Who saves you by His grace,
And crown Him Lord of all!

Sinners, whose love can ne'er forget
The wormwood and the gall,
Go spread your trophies at His feet,
And crown Him Lord of all.

Let every kindred, every tribe,
On this terrestrial ball,
To Him all majesty ascribe,
And crown Him Lord of all!

Crown Him, ye martyrs of your God,

Who from His altar call;
Extol the Stem of Jesse's Rod,
And crown Him Lord of all.

Oh, that with yonder sacred throng
We at His feet may fall!
We'll join the everlasting song,
And crown Him Lord of all!

3. THE HOLY SPIRIT—THE DIRECTOR

Acts 11:12
Then the Spirit told me to go with them, doubting nothing. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered the man's house.

In Kingdom Building, it is essential that we submit to the direction and leading of the Holy Spirit. In fact, in living the Christian life we must follow the leading of the Holy Spirit in all we become and in all we do. Regardless of our vocation, we must be led by the Spirit of God.

Those Who Do The Father's Will—Rewarded In Eternity

It is only those who do the Father's will and not their own, who will be rewarded in eternity.

Matthew 7:21–23
21 Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.
22 Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?'
23 And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

It is possible to do many wonderful things "in His name" and yet be totally devoid of a personal relationship with Him.

It is possible to do many wonderful things "in His name" and yet be called one who practiced lawlessness.

Anything that is not the will of God and that is not born out of a relationship with Him, even if it is done "in His name," is called lawlessness.

It is possible to do many wonderful things "in His name" and yet fail to do the will of the Father.

Too often we initiate projects, programs, ministries, and then tag on the name of the Lord to it, hoping that doing so would make it the will of God.

Our priority should be to know Him, to know His will, to practice righteousness, and then

proceed to do the works of power that He has called us to do in His name.

When we make the tree good, then the fruit will also be good.

The Holy Spirit Reveals The Father's Will To Us On Earth

John 16:13–15
13 However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.
14 He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.
15 All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.

The Holy Spirit speaks to us the very things that the Lord Jesus is speaking. The Father reveals it to Jesus and the Spirit speaks it to our hearts.

The Holy Spirit reveals things to us ahead of time. There are things He may speak into our hearts that are intended for a future season of our lives. He requires that we carry this word in our spirits, and patiently prepare for the work He has spoken to us about.

The Holy Spirit always glorifies Jesus. The word that the Spirit speaks exalts and magnifies the Lord Jesus. If I believe I have heard from the Spirit of God on what the Lord wants me to do, but if that work exalts me and promotes me, I can be sure that I have not heard from the Spirit of God.

Romans 8:14
For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

As sons and daughters of God, we have the privilege of being led by the Spirit of God.

Therefore, we can know the heart and mind of God. We can know the Father's will as revealed to us by the Holy Spirit.

We must understand the absolute importance of being led by the Spirit and doing things according to the Father's will.

That Born Of The Flesh Is Flesh And That Of The Spirit Is Spirit

John 3:6
That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

What is birthed of the flesh cannot be "converted" into something of the Spirit.

Very often, we give birth to things by the energy of our flesh and hope that somehow, they would become works of the Spirit. This cannot be done.

Exodus 30:22–33
22 Moreover the Lord spoke to Moses, saying:
23 "Also take for yourself quality spices—five hundred shekels of liquid myrrh, half as much sweet-smelling cinnamon (two hundred and fifty shekels), two hundred and fifty shekels of sweet-smelling cane,
24 five hundred shekels of cassia, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, and a hin of olive oil.
25 And you shall make from these a holy anointing oil, an ointment compounded according to the art of the perfumer. It shall be a holy anointing oil.
26 With it you shall anoint the tabernacle of meeting and the ark of the Testimony;
27 the table and all its utensils, the lampstand and its utensils, and the altar of incense;
28 the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, and the laver and its base.
29 You shall consecrate them, that they may be most holy; whatever touches them must be holy.
30 And you shall anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may minister to Me as priests.
31"And you shall speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'This shall be a holy anointing oil to Me throughout your generations.
32 It shall not be poured on man's flesh; nor shall you make any other like it, according to its composition. It is holy, and it shall be holy to you.
33 Whoever compounds any like it, or whoever puts any of it on an outsider, shall be cut off from his people.'"

The holy anointing oil in the Old Testament is a "type and shadow" of the anointing of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament.

We learn some important lessons from the Old Testament "type and shadow" of the anointing of the Holy Spirit:

- ✓ Whatever is used in the service of God must be anointed by God (Vs 26–28),
- ✓ Whatever is anointed by God becomes consecrated unto God (Vs 29-30),
- ✓ God will not anoint what is born of the flesh (Vs 32),
- ✓ God will not tolerate any imitation of the anointing (Vs 32),
- ✓ What is born of the flesh does not have the life and presence of God (Vs 33).

God cannot anoint what is born of the flesh. What is born of the flesh is just an imitation of the true work of God. It will be "cut off" from the life, presence, and anointing of God.

That Born Of The Flesh Hinders What God Desires To Birth Of The Spirit

Galatians 4:29
But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, even so it is now.

The things that we birth of the flesh will be the very things that hinder and attempt to destroy the things that we birth of the Spirit.

Often, the greatest struggles we face are not with the devices of the enemy, but with the very things that we have birthed of the flesh.

Galatians 5:17
For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.

What is of the flesh will always oppose what is of the Spirit. The counterfeit will always oppose the genuine. The false will always oppose the true. Therefore, we must be careful not to give birth to what is of the flesh. This is true not only in Christian ministry, but in all other areas of life.

That Born Of The Flesh Produces No Benefit

John 6:63
It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.

That which is born of the flesh will not benefit people. It does not have the power to produce life.

What is birthed of the flesh may appeal to the senses. It may please the senses. It may elevate the emotions and make people feel good. But genuine life, power, and transformation only comes by the presence and power of the Spirit.

We need the ability to discern what is of the flesh and what is of the Spirit. So many Christians are satisfied with a "feel good" Christianity where fleshly ministry pampers their senses and emotions with no genuine call to be transformed into Christlikeness.

Psalm 127:1
Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it; unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman stays awake in vain.

If the Lord does not build it, then whatever I build is in vain. It may look grand, great, and may even receive the applause of men. But these are the kind of buildings that Paul said are works of "*wood, hay, straw*." These will not be able to stand the test of fire (1 Corinthians 3:12-13).

As a Kingdom Builder my single-minded desire should be to do the Father's will—to give birth to things of the Spirit alone.

Walk In The Spirit And You Will Not Birth Things Of The Flesh

Galatians 5:16
I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

To walk in the Spirit is to live a life that is sensitive and yielded to the Holy Spirit. This is the way we are called to live. Living life yielded to the Spirit of God is what ensures that we do not birth what is of the flesh.

Walking in the Spirit is a daily, moment by moment, choice we make to move under the influence of the Spirit rather than yielding to the dictates of the flesh. There are times this happens almost spontaneously where we find ourselves just flowing in the river of the Spirit easily and readily. There are times when the voice of the flesh cries out loud demanding attention. These are moments when we draw strengthen from the Spirit to shut out ("crucify") the voice of the flesh and make a determined choice to follow the Spirit of God.

Walk Yielded And In Brokenness

Those of us who are "self-made," highly skilled, and very competent in ourselves are most likely to initiate things of the flesh rather than out of dependence on the Holy Spirit. Hence, it is so important for us to remain in a state of being yielded and broken.

Yielding is a choice. To yield is to submit. We choose to willingly listen and submit to the Holy Spirit. We remain cautious not to grieve or quench the Holy Spirit in any way. In fact, that is the only way we desire to live.

Brokenness is a choice. Brokenness is simply complete dependence on the Lord. Even though we may be gifted and talented, we choose to recognize the fact that we are earthen vessels and that it is only the anointing of God in us, upon us, and through us, that will bring fruit. Hence, we choose to stay away from dependence on our gifting and instead lean solely on the power of God at work. This is the only way we choose to minister.

Two Test Questions: What Motivates Me? Who Is Glorified?

How can we tell if what we are doing is of the flesh or of the Spirit? One simple test is to ask the question, "What motivates me?" If we are motivated to do what we are doing out of hatred, contention, jealousy, anger, selfish ambition, dissension, heresy, envy, and similar things (Galatians 5:20-21), then we are producing what is of the flesh and not of the Spirit. If we are motivated by righteousness, peace, joy, edifying others, and similar things (Romans 14:17-19), then we are producing what is of the Spirit.

Another simple test is to ask the question, "Who is being glorified?" If Christ alone is exalted, magnified, and glorified then what we are doing is of the Spirit. If there is a mixture, some of Jesus and some of me or my ministry, then things are questionable.

The Holy Spirit Reveals "Where," "When," And "How"

Through the book of Acts, we see the Holy Spirit directing the work and believers acting in accordance with His directives. The Holy Spirit revealed the where, when, and how and the believers moved out according to what He instructed.

Acts 8:29
Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go near and overtake this chariot."

The Holy Spirit leading Philip to meet with the Ethiopian eunuch was so strategic. The Ethiopian was at the point where Philip could minister to Him and lead him to Jesus Christ.

Acts 10:19-20
19 While Peter thought about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are seeking you."
20 Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them."

Acts 11:12
Then the Spirit told me to go with them, doubting nothing. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered the man's house.

It was the Holy Spirit who directed Peter to go to meet Cornelius without doubting. This opened the door for the Gospel to be preached to the Gentiles.

Notice that the Holy Spirit did not give long, detailed, descriptive instructions to both Philip and Peter, on what to do. He did not even disclose what was going to happen—how important the work was. In Philip's case, the Gospel would be taken into Africa. In Peter's case, the Gospel was going to be proclaimed for the first time to the Gentiles. Both were monumental, in terms of the growth and expansion of the Kingdom. Yet, the Holy Spirit's instructions were very short and simple. Big doors turn on small hinges. Great things happen when simple instructions of the Spirit are obeyed!

Acts 13:2–4
2 As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."
3 Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.
4 So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus.

It was the Holy Spirit who called out Barnabas and Saul into the ministry He had for them. They were "*sent out by the Holy Spirit*!"

We need to let the Holy Spirit have His way in our congregations, to call people out for the specific work He has for them. If we need to release them into a work that is outside our own local church ministry, we should do so, blessing, and releasing people to obey what the Spirit desires of them.

Acts 16:6–10
6 Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia.
7 After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them.
8 So passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas.
9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us."
10 Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them.

The Lord Jesus had given the Great Commission to go into the entire world and preach the Gospel to every creature. Yet here we see the Holy Spirit forbidding Paul and his team from going into Asia and Bithynia to preach the Gospel, at that specific time. Instead, they were led into Macedonia.

The Holy Spirit knows exactly when, where, and how we must go about doing the work of the Kingdom.

2 Corinthians 1:15–17
15 And in this confidence I intended to come to you before, that you might have a second benefit—
16 to pass by way of you to Macedonia, to come again from Macedonia to you, and be helped by you on my way to Judea.
17 Therefore, when I was planning this, did I do it lightly? Or the things I plan, do I plan according to the flesh, that with me there should be Yes, Yes, and No, No?

We need to follow Spirit-inspired planning. Even the things we plan and purpose, must be inspired by the Holy Spirit.

The work of the Kingdom cannot not be done with just human understanding. Kingdom work requires Spirit-guided Kingdom thinking. It requires minds that are renewed with the Word of God. Minds that think in terms of God's ways and in line with God's thoughts.

The Promptings Of The Spirit Come In Several Different Ways

Romans 8:16
The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

We need to learn how to listen to the leading of the Spirit as He directs us. The Holy Spirit speaks to us in many ways:

- A quickening of the written Word,
- The still small inner witness (impression),
- A flash of information in your spirit,
- A knowing on the inside,

- The peace of God or other impressions or feeling in your spirit,
- An idea or pictures that communicate the purpose of God,
- Through prophecy,
- Dreams and visions,
- Physical manifestations,
- Other ways.

It Is Essential To Establish An Unbreakable Communion With The Holy Spirit

2 Corinthians 13:14
The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

We are called to walk in communion, continuous fellowship, with the Holy Spirit of God. Part of walking in communion with the Holy Spirit is maintaining an undisturbed communication channel with the Holy Spirit. We must constantly remain tuned in, listening, and speaking with Him. This way, we will know when He has spoken and will not miss His directives.

Setting aside time regularly for prayer and meditation in God's Word is important. This helps us renew our minds and realign ourselves to the Lord.

Walking in a state of inner calmness ensures that we walk under His influence. There may be turbulence all around us, but we can ensure that our inner calm, our inner peace is undisturbed as we walk in the peace of God that is beyond understanding. The Holy Spirit is like a dove, resting on those who walk in peace. Walking in peace, is walking in Him who is God the peace, who crushes the enemy under our feet (Romans 16:20).

We must maintain purity of heart, life, and motives. The purity of our heart influences our revelation of Go, because it is the pure in heart who will "see" God (Matthew 5:8). When what we "see" of God is birthed out of fleshly desires instead of a pure heart, we get a tainted picture of God, a "revelation" of God that is untrue. We call this heresy. The Holy Spirit is Holy, and hence delights in those who choose what He delights in, holiness. "*But know that the LORD has set apart for Himself him who is godly*" (Psalm 4:3).

Walking in love is key to maintaining this fellowship with the Spirit. "*God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him*" (1 John 4:16). We cannot walk in Him or walk in the Spirit if we are not walking in love.

It Is Essential To Discern The Spirit's Timing

It is also important to discern the Spirit's timing for action—whether the action must be immediate, later, or way ahead in the future.

There are times when He says, "*Go near and overtake this chariot*" (Acts 8:29). This must be obeyed instantaneously without questioning, otherwise we could miss the plan of God. There are other times when He speaks and we have the time to pray, prepare, and then act on His instruction (Acts 13:1–4).

Praying In The Spirit Prepares My Spirit To Understand The Purposes Of God

1 Corinthians 2:9-10,16
9 But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him."
10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.
16 For "who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

It is the Holy Spirit who reveals to us the things that God has prepared for us. These might initially be a mystery to us—things that our eyes have not seen, our ears have not heard, neither have those things entered our thinking. But it is the Holy Spirit who reveals these mysteries to us. We then have the mind of Christ—we know the thoughts, plans, and purposes that He has in His mind for us because these have been revealed to us by His Spirit.

1 Corinthians 14:2
For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries.

When we pray in the Spirit, we speak mysteries. It will be safe to conclude that part of these mysteries would be the things that God has prepared for us—the thoughts, plans, and purposes of God for our individual lives.

Praying In The Spirit Aligns My Will To God's Will

Hebrews 5:7–9
7 Who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear,
8 though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.
9 And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.

It is interesting to observe that the Scriptures state that the Lord Jesus "learned

obedience" by the things He suffered. He "learned obedience"—there was an aligning of His will to the Father's will.

We know that this happened in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Matthew 26:38-39,42
38 Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me."
39 He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.
42 Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done."

Prayer changes us. Prayer helps align our wills to the Father's will. In times of prayer, God works on our hearts, bringing our wills, desires, and dreams in alignment to His will, plans, and purposes.

Romans 8:26-27
26 Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.
27 Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

While we can pray in our own language, God has given us a powerful Helper in prayer—the Holy Spirit Himself—who helps us pray. When we pray in tongues, we pray by the Spirit. We know that prayer originating from the Spirit is always according to the will of God. Therefore, praying in the Spirit becomes an opportune time for our wills to become aligned to His will.

Giving Birth To A Work Of The Spirit—Some Lessons From The "Mary Miracle"

The incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ, being conceived and born of the Virgin Mary, was truly a work of the Holy Spirit. While the work God releases through us, is nowhere in comparison to the birth of the Son of God, a close look at the "Mary Miracle" teaches us several things about how God releases the work of the Spirit through human vessels.

The Work of the Spirit Is Released into the Earth at the Appointed Time

Genesis 3:15
And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.

Galatians 4:4
But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law.

Although the coming of the "Seed" of the woman was foretold in the Garden of Eden, it was not until about 4000 years later that Christ came into this world.

The work of God is always released into the earth, in the fullness of time.

God speaks to us about the work He calls us to do, ahead of time, often many years ahead of time. But He releases His work through us in the appointed time.

The Work of the Spirit Is Released Through Ordinary People

Isaiah 7:14
Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.

When God wanted to send the Savior of the world, He did not choose a princess or a highly educated woman. He did not even choose a woman who was very experienced in childbirth and delivery. Instead, He chose a little, insignificant, inexperienced virgin named Mary.

From our viewpoint, it seems as though God was taking a huge risk in choosing an inexperienced virgin to give birth to the Son of God, the Savior of the world. What if there was a miscarriage? What if she did not take care of herself during her pregnancy?

From God's perspective, the outcome is dependent on Him, not on us. He only asks for our availability, our obedience, and our trust from us. Mary responded by making herself available to the Lord. She said, "*Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word*" (Luke 1:38). God's assurance to her was "*Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord*" (Luke 1:45).

God is not afraid of entrusting ordinary people with the work of His eternal Kingdom.

The Work of the Spirit Must Be Unadulterated—Born Purely of His Spirit

Luke 1:35
And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.

Every work that God would release through us must be born purely of His Spirit, untainted with the work of the flesh.

We must make the deliberate choice to say, "no" to what is of the flesh, and "yes" to only what is of the Spirit.

The Work of the Spirit Might Be a Cause for Embarrassment

Matthew 1:19
Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly.

Although Mary carried in her womb the Son of God—this did bring her embarrassment. How could she explain her pregnancy to her own family, her neighbors, and most of all to the man she was betrothed to marry, Joseph? Who would ever believe her story that she had an angelic visitation, and was with child because of the power of the Holy Spirit?

However, God did speak to the people who mattered. God spoke to Joseph in a dream. The Holy Spirit testified through Elizabeth, Mary's relative.

There are times that we may be embarrassed while carrying a genuine work of God in our lives. People may not understand us. Some may misunderstand us. This does not mean that what we are carrying within us is not of God. The work of the Spirit is genuine. But people around us may not understand. And yet, in the midst of the embarrassment, confusion, shame, misunderstanding, discouragement, there will be a select few who do understand, because the Lord has also spoken to their hearts. Stay around people who will help and encourage you to press further with the work that God is releasing through you.

The Work of the Spirit Is Released Through Normal Natural Processes

1 Corinthians 15:10
But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

Even though the conception was a miracle, Mary had to carry the child for nine long months, the full term! Why didn't God make the whole thing a miracle? Conception on day one. Full term on day two. Delivery on day three! Lo and behold, a child is born in three days! Would that not have been an indisputable sign that the Son of God, the Messiah, had come into this world?

However, things did not happen that way. Although the conception was supernatural, a work of the Spirit, Mary had to engage in the normal natural process of pregnancy and delivery.

Similarly, God initiates His work in us by His Spirit. But we need to co-labor with God, by the empowering of His grace, to see the work released on the earth. We need to do the normal natural things that need to be done to cause His work to be released on the earth. We need to sacrifice, work hard, persevere, plan, organize, manage, and do what needs to be done. The Apostle Paul said he labored more than all the other apostles.

We Might Encounter Closed Doors until We Reach God's Appointed Place

Luke 2:7
And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Surely God knew the exact day and time the Son of God was to be born. However, it is a wonder, that though the Father knew that Jesus was going to be born at that time, He still did not "reserve" a room for Him in an inn.

We could imagine as Mary and Joseph travelled all the way to Bethlehem, Mary must have had the confidence in her heart that they would get a clean, comfortable room at the very first Inn they arrived at. Surely, God would have made all the provision for His Son to be born. Imagine the shock, the disappointment, the discouragement, and the questions that Mary and Joseph endured, when Inn after Inn was fully occupied and there was no room available anywhere. Finally, after Mary and Joseph had knocked, possibly on several Inns, they arrived at a place, where the man offered the cattle shed, where Jesus was to be born. The cattle shed was surely not what they had envisioned as the birthing place for the Son of God! But that was the place where the Son of God was to be born that night.

We should not be discouraged when we face closed doors when attempting to release the work God has birthed in us. A closed door could simply be God directing us to the place where He wants us to release what He is birthing through us. We must keep moving till we arrive at the place where God wants His work to be released.

The Work of the Spirit, Often has Simple, Humble Beginnings

Imagine the God of this universe, the Savior of the world, the King of all kings, born in a manger, an animal feed trough. Surely, God could have done this differently if He chose to. He could have picked a palace, a rich home, or even a deluxe room in the best Inn, in Bethlehem. But instead, He chose the lowliest of all places, a cattle stall.

God releases His work in small ways. But these simple beginnings are still the work of God, often designed to impact the whole world.

About His work, God says, *"Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit"* (Zechariah 4:6). But also, in this context He tells us "*For who has despised the day of small things*?" (Zechariah 4:10). Do not despise the day of small beginnings, the day of humble beginnings.

The Work of the Spirit Has to Be Protected and Nurtured

Luke 2:40
And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.

Matthew 2:12–16
12 Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.
13 Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him."
14 When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt,
15 And was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son."
16 Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men.

Imagine, after Mary had given birth to the baby, what would have happened if she had said, "I won't need to feed, bathe, and take care of this baby, because anyway this is the Son of God. The angels will take care of Him." That would be foolish. Yes indeed, this was the Son of God, but Mary and Joseph had to take care of the baby, nurture, and protect this child as parents would normally do.

Every work of God that we release on the earth must be nurtured and protected. Just because it is a work of the Spirit, that does not mean that we are not responsible for stewarding it well. Rather, knowing its eternal importance, we need to be extremely good stewards of the work God had released through us, so that His intended purposes will be fulfilled.

Reflection

1. Do you normally tune into listen to the Spirit when making decisions and plans about things you do? Are you aware that the decisions you are making is "*good, acceptable, perfect*" in His sight?
2. Review the Mary Miracle and consider what aspects of the work of the Spirit you can relate to at present.

For further study on learning to hear from the Spirit of God, please review the free APC book: "Understanding the Prophetic."

For further study on praying in the Spirit, please review the free APC book: "The Wonderful Benefits of Praying in Tongues."

All Over the World

Written by: Roy Turner

All over the world the Spirit is moving
All over the world as the prophet said it would be
All over the world there's a mighty revelation
Of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea

All over His church God's Spirit is moving
All over His church as the prophet said it would be
All over His church there's a mighty revelation
Of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea

Right here in this place the Spirit is moving
Right here in this place as the prophet said it would be
Right here in this place there's a mighty revelation
Of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea

4. THE NATURE OF A GOD-GIVEN VISION

Acts 16:19
"Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision,

This is the hour for visions and dreams. By "visions and dreams" we mean not only to the supernatural spiritual experiences of God speaking to us through dreams when asleep or visions that we see. We are also referring to the ideas, plans, purposes, goals, and strategies that the Holy Spirit births in His people. All of these are first conceived in some one's heart by the Spirit of God as an idea, a thought, a picture, a passion—which we refer to as a "God-given vision."

Acts 2:17-18
17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams.
18 And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy.

Dreams and visions are the language of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God communicates to us through dreams and visions—whether these are supernatural spiritual experiences or the seemingly more mundane ideas, thoughts, pictures, and desires, which He instills in us.

God does not give us visions and dreams merely to provide us with "heavenly entertainment." Every vision and dream have a purpose. Very often it is God revealing what He desires for us to execute on the earth. God-given dreams and visions are pregnant with Kingdom purpose—waiting to be fulfilled!

Many of us have visions, dreams, and desires from God to do something for God. We want to live a meaningful life and do something that will make a difference for God's Kingdom. We desire to be Kingdom builders. But how do we get there from here, from where we are today? How does God take us on this journey to see His dream fulfilled through our lives?

Our goal in this chapter is to understand how God imparts His vision and how God takes us on a journey to see that vision fulfilled in our lives, and in the process carry out the purposes of His Kingdom. This will enable us to walk accurately with God and be true Kingdom builders.

Here are several insights concerning a God-given vision:

A God-Given Vision Is A Divine Command And An Authorization

Acts 26:19
Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.

A God-given vision is a divine command and authorization from God to establish and extend God's Kingdom on the earth.

- It is a command to be obeyed.
- It is an authorization from heaven that makes us bold, fearless, and confident. We can go about pursuing the vision, knowing that God is backing us up. For every vision God imparts, God is one hundred percent committed to seeing the vision fulfilled. If the great God of this universe is backing us up, then nothing other than our unwillingness can prevent it from coming to pass in and through us.
- The one with the vision becomes the vision-bearer. God will work in and through this person to see that vision fulfilled. However, this does not happen in isolation. There are several factors and several people that need to come together to see the vision fulfilled.
- When God wants to execute something on the earth, He usually raises a PERSON in a certain PLACE, to PROCLAIM a certain message. This stirs up a PEOPLE who come together to fulfill God's PURPOSE.
- God raises a MAN (i.e., person, either a man or woman), whose MISSION is to fulfill a specific purpose from God. God uses this man to proclaim a MESSAGE and gives him a MINISTRY. This man becomes the vision-holder or vision-bearer among these people. God also entrusts to this man, the METHODS he should use and the MEANS to carry them out, to fulfill God's divine purpose.

We will consider examples of some men of God in the Bible to see how God worked through them. Moses is one of these examples. Here is a summary of how God gave Moses a vision and raised him up to fulfill it.

Acts 7:17–36
17 "But when the time of the promise drew near which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt
18 Till another king arose who did not know Joseph.
19 This man dealt treacherously with our people, and oppressed our forefathers, making them expose their babies, so that they might not live.
20 At this time Moses was born, and was well pleasing to God; and he was brought up in his father's house for three months.
21 But when he was set out, Pharaoh's daughter took him away and brought him up as her own son.
22 And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds.
23 "Now when he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel.

24 And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended and avenged him who was oppressed, and struck down the Egyptian.
25 For he supposed that his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand, but they did not understand.
26 And the next day he appeared to two of them as they were fighting, and tried to reconcile them, saying, 'Men, you are brethren; why do you wrong one another?'
27 But he who did his neighbor wrong pushed him away, saying, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge over us?
28 Do you want to kill me as you did the Egyptian yesterday?'
29 Then, at this saying, Moses fled and became a dweller in the land of Midian, where he had two sons.
30 "And when forty years had passed, an Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire in a bush, in the wilderness of Mount Sinai.
31 When Moses saw it, he marveled at the sight; and as he drew near to observe, the voice of the Lord came to him,
32 Saying, 'I am the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' And Moses trembled and dared not look.
33 'Then the Lord said to him, "Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground.
34 I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt; I have heard their groaning and have come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send you to Egypt."
35 "This Moses whom they rejected, saying, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge?' is the one God sent to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the Angel who appeared to him in the bush.
36 He brought them out, after he had shown wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness forty years."

A God-Given Vision Is Often Detected By A Simple Stirring In Our Hearts

While God does speak in supernatural ways to reveal His plans and purposes, often, the recognition of a heavenly vision comes as a simple stirring in our hearts. Something captures our hearts. Something gets our attention because God's presence is upon it. Just like the burning bush that Moses' saw in the wilderness. There may have been other bushes too, but one got his attention, because God's presence was upon it. And from there, God spoke and released His call. The thing that gets your attention—your burning bush—is often the place where God's presence is and where God's voice is being released describing your call and destiny**.**

However, what Moses heard through the burning bush was given to him about forty years earlier.

Acts 7:23
Now when he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel.

Forty years prior to the burning bush experience, God placed a stirring in Moses' heart. It was less spectacular than the burning bush, but nonetheless it was the same God speaking and the same vision being released, that God was going to raise Moses to deliver His people. Moses knew that he was God's man, being raised up to be a deliverer of God's

people, forty years before the burning bush encounter (Acts 7:28). This came through a simple stirring, a simple desire, a simple knowing rising up in his heart.

Consider Nehemiah, the man whom God raised up with the mission to rebuild the walls of the city of Jerusalem. How did Nehemiah receive his God-given vision?

Nehemiah 1:1–4
1 The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. It came to pass in the month of Chislev, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the citadel,
2 that Hanani one of my brethren came with men from Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews who had escaped, who had survived the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem.
3 And they said to me, "The survivors who are left from the captivity in the province are there in great distress and reproach. The wall of Jerusalem is also broken down, and its gates are burned with fire."
4 So it was, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned for many days; I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven.

When Nehemiah heard the news about the walls of the city of Jerusalem, something stirred within him. Many other Jewish captives were aware of the condition of the city walls. But it didn't seem to bother them as much as it bothered Nehemiah. It affected him. He wept, mourned, fasted, and prayed—about the city walls!

Pay attention to what stirs your heart.

Later when Nehemiah arrived at Jerusalem and surveyed the broken walls of the city, he realized that what stirred him was really something that God had put in his heart to do at Jerusalem. This was his God-given vision. A mission from God that he must carry out on the earth!

Nehemiah 2:12
Then I arose in the night, I and a few men with me; I told no one what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem; nor was there any animal with me, except the one on which I rode.

A God-Given Vision Has An Appointed Time For Initiation And Execution

Acts 7:17,20
17 But when the time *(chronos)* **of the promise drew near which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt**
20 At this time *(kairos)* **Moses was born, and was well pleasing to God; and he was brought up in his father's house for three months.**

God had promised Abraham that His people would be enslaved for four hundred years (Genesis 15:13). This period is referred to as '*chronos*'—duration of time or number of days. When this period had come close to its end, then arrived the '*kairos*'—the "*fullness of time*," a specific condition on the earth. The "*fullness of time*" is when "the time is ripe" and has to do with the coming together of things—both external and internal factors. In

the fullness of time Moses was raised up.

There is a '*kairos*' moment (time or season) for the initiation and execution of a God-given vision.

External factors that determine the '*kairos*' time include:

- **People**: in addition to the vision-bearer, those who are going to serve as part of the vision also need to be prepared. Sometimes some people or individuals who may be a hindrance may need to be removed out of the way. Sometimes the previous generation must run its course and make way for the next generation.
- **Place**(s): God prepares the place (city, region, environment) where the work is going to be released.
- **Things surrounding the vision-bearer**, e.g., his finances, his family, etc.

God must bring these together so that His purpose can be carried out.

Internal factors include conditions concerning the life, preparation, and readiness of the vision-bearer. These include conditions such as:

- Right heart attitudes,
- Right relationships with people,
- Maturity and spiritual development in several areas of life,
- Personal life (disciplines, home, family) being in order,
- Possessing the heart of a servant,
- Faithfulness in little things,
- Christlike character.

We can either hasten or delay the *'kairos'* moments in our lives, by the progress of internal factors in our lives.

Life is lived in seasons, in stages, or phases. This means that there will be several '*chronos*' phases and '*kairos*' moments that God takes us through along the way. We must be like "*the sons of Issachar who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do,* ..." (1 Chronicles 12:32). We must recognize the times and seasons God is taking us through as He progressively unfolds His Kingdom purposes and causes His visions and dreams to be fulfilled through our lives.

A God-Given Vision Requires Preparation

Part of the journey into fulfilling a God-given vision is the preparation process that we

need to go through. It takes time for God to prepare us and make us, before He can manifest the vision, calling, and gifting through us.

God prepares us through several different ways. The primary preparation that all of us go through is the development of our own personal spiritual walk with God and growth in Christlike character.

During our time of preparation, God may give us the opportunity to associate with and work alongside other leaders. This can help us immensely. We should step into someone else's dream and vision and serve faithfully. For in helping someone else fulfill their dream, we are being trained and equipped to fulfill God's dreams for our lives.

During our time of preparation, sometimes we may spend seasons of life doing things that may not seem directly related to the vision that is in our hearts. Things we are compelled to do and to go through, don't seem to make sense and don't seem to be relevant to what we are carrying in our hearts. However, through these seemingly "disconnected seasons" we are still being prepared and developed in other areas of life that are important for the fulfilling of the vision. The Lord will take us through various seasons of life, with each season designed to bring about growth in specific areas.

Preparation time is never wasted time. Our focus should be to work with God, be yielded to His working in our lives in each season.

Consider the journey, especially the "preparation time" that some of these people in the Bible went through.

Joseph

Psalm 105:17-22
17 He sent a man before them— Joseph—who was sold as a slave.
18 They hurt his feet with fetters, He was laid in irons.
19Until the time that his word came to pass, the word of the LORD tested him.
20 The king sent and released him, the ruler of the people let him go free.
21 He made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his possessions,
22 To bind his princes at his pleasure, and teach his elders wisdom.

Joseph as a young man, possibly a teenager, received dreams from God that revealed part of God's plans for his life. But things took an unexpected turn as he was sold away as a slave by his brothers. Joseph found himself alone in a foreign land, serving Potiphar in Egypt. Things seemed tolerable as God blessed him in Potiphar's house, until again unexpectedly he was thrown into prison, being falsely accused. All of this could have shaken Joseph's faith in God and the vision that he had received. This must all have seemed unnecessary and painful. But God was orchestrating things, moving Joseph closer to seeing the dream becoming a reality. And then came the time when suddenly Joseph

went from being in prison to being made the prime minister, second-in -command to Pharaoh, in Egypt. Joseph walked in the fulfillment of his God-given dreams.

If we look at the timeline and examine how God worked in his life here is what we find.

- Joseph was 17 years old when he was sold into Egypt (Genesis 37:2).
- He was 30 when he was brought out of prison and made the overseer over all of Egypt (Genesis 41:46). This means, he spent a total of 13 years in Egypt before being elevated to his position as prime minister—about 11 years in Potiphar's house and then about 2 years in prison (Genesis 41:1).
- After serving faithfully for another 9 years, Joseph was 39 when he first got to see his brothers when they came to Egypt the first time to buy food (second year of the famine, or nine years after being made the overseer).
- He was probably about 41 when the brothers came a second time with their father Jacob, and Joseph dreams were fulfilled.
- So, it took approximately 30 years from the time he had the dreams to the time the dreams were fulfilled.
- Thereafter, he spent the remaining 70 years doing what God wanted him to do and died when he was about 110 years old (Genesis 50:22).
- Stepping into the fulfillment of a God-given vision is important. For Joseph this happened when he was about 40 years old. But continuing in that vision is equally important. Joseph walked in it for many years, possibly another 70 years.

Moses

- God supernaturally arranged for Moses to be taught and trained in Pharaoh's palace. This was God's "seed of spiritual destiny" in Moses' life (Acts 7:22). These were Moses' initial preparation and positioning for his heavenly purpose.
- At the age of 40, Moses began to understand his divine purpose. However, he made the mistake of trying to accomplish it through his own methods.
- Every time we attempt to do something in our own ability—we further delay the unfolding of God's plan. Moses attempted to go at it all by himself and it only delayed things by 40 years!
- Moses had to spend 40 long years in the wilderness (Acts 7:29-30; Exodus 2:15,23), simply because he had to wait for the king whom he had angered, to die.
- At the age of 80, Moses resumed his divine mission.
- For the next 40 years, he went about carrying out his life's purpose.

For Moses, though being a great man of God, because of a serious mistake, he was not able to enter into the Land of Promise. He only saw if from afar (Numbers 20:12; Deuteronomy 31:2; Deuteronomy 34:4). Moses died at the age of 120 (Deuteronomy 34:7).

David

- David was anointed to be king while he was a teenage boy (1 Samuel 16). Let us say he was 13 years of age at this time.
- He had his initial training taking care of his father's sheep. It must have been during this time that he developed his skill in music, killed the lion and bear, and gained a good reputation among the people of Israel. He played music for Saul whenever needed (1 Samuel 16:17,23; 1 Samuel 17:15).
- He had initial success when he killed Goliath and became a national hero. David was probably 15-17 years of age (1 Samuel 17).
- Saul banishes David from his court, yet he makes him commander of a thousand (1 Samuel 18:13), perhaps hoping David will die in battle.
- The tide turned and David had to run for his life when King Saul decided to kill him.
- The next several years David lived like a vagabond (1 Samuel 22:1-2). The man who was anointed to be king spent some time in caves!
- However, it was during this time that God sent men who joined David and later became important captains in his mighty army!
- When David was about 23 years old, he became king of Judah and ruled for 7 years and 6 months over Judah (2 Samuel 2:1–4, 11).
- David was 30 years old when he was finally made king over all of Israel and Judah (2 Samuel 5:4-5). He then reigned for 40 years as king (1 Kings 2:11).
- David must have been about age 70-75 years when he died, having served God's purposes in his own generation (Acts 13:22,36).
- About 17 years of preparation—from the time of his "calling" by the Prophet Samuel at age 13 to when he was "commissioned" to step into his call as king over all Israel at age 30.

Paul

- Paul must have been about 33 years of age when he had his encounter on the road to Damascus with the Lord Jesus. It took that many years to be trained as a Pharisee.
- At the time of his encounter, the Lord Jesus revealed his calling to be a light to the Gentiles, an apostle of the faith.
- Paul initially spent three years in Damascus and Arabia (Galatians 1:16-17; Acts 9:19–25). People tried to kill him in Damascus and so he fled into Arabia and then returned later. It must have been during this time that he received much of the revelation of the Gospel which he preached.
- After this, he visited Jerusalem for 15 days (Galatians 1:18; Acts 9:26–30) during which time he preached boldly. But once again people tried to kill him, and he left for Tarsus.
- He then spent about 13 years in the regions of Tarsus, Syria, and Cilicia (Galatians

1:21–24; Galatians 2:1).

- Toward the end of these 13 years, Barnabas comes to Tarsus and brought Saul to Antioch (Acts 11:25-26).
- Paul then spent a whole year teaching in the church at Antioch.
- At the end of this year, Paul makes his second trip to Jerusalem along with Barnabas to carry relief to those in the middle of a famine (Acts 11:29-30). So, he goes to Jerusalem after a gap of 14 years (Galatians 2:1).
- At this point, about 17 years had elapsed since his meeting with the Lord on the road to Damascus. Paul must have been about 50 years old at this time.
- Nothing much is recorded about the first 17 years of Paul's Christian life and walk with God. Of course, we know that Paul preached and taught during this time. We know that he received revelation and understanding of the mysteries of God. However, nothing much is recorded of what he did and preached. These are referred to as the "silent years" of Paul's life. These, in addition to His prior training under Judaism formed part of his training.
- Finally, in Acts 13, after 17 years, Paul is called into his first missionary journey with Barnabas (Acts 13:1–4).
- In Acts 14:14, Paul along with Barnabas is referred to as an apostle for the first time.
- It was about 17 years after his encounter with the Lord that Paul stepped into his apostolic ministry. Seventeen years of preparation and training even for Apostle Paul. God is not in a hurry!

Jeremiah

- Jeremiah was given his prophetic call even before he was born. God told him not to allow people to tell him he was too young.
- Yet, historically, we know that Jeremiah waited at least 16 years from the time of the visitation, in Chapter 1, to his first prophetic utterance.

Every God-given vision has its appointed time for initiation, execution, and fulfillment. Between now and the time our God-given vision is initiated, is a time of preparation.

Preparation time involves a period of waiting—waiting for the initiation and carrying out of the God-given vision. But waiting does not mean we are idle. Waiting and being idle are two different things. Being idle is being inactive, doing nothing. During preparation, although we are waiting for the unfolding of the vision, we are actively involved with what God has assigned us to do in the waiting period. During his waiting period, Joseph served with excellence in Potiphar's house and later in prison. During his waiting period, Moses got married and took care of his father-in-law's sheep. During his waiting period, David raised up an army, engaged in important battles, learned to hear from God, and trust in God for victories. During his waiting period, Paul received the abundance of revelations

that he eventually preached, taught, and wrote about.

In our journey with God, the preparation process never ends. Each season is really a preparation for the next season of life. Each phase is a preparation for the next phase of the journey or for something still up ahead in the future. So, we must remain in a constant state of learning, growing, and maturing with God.

The Unfolding Of A God-Given Vision May Differ From Our Expectation

Sometimes we misunderstand how God would go about fulfilling the vision He has given us. How these dreams may unfold and express themselves in our lives could be very different from what we imagined or expected.

We must remain open to whichever way God causes these dreams to become a reality. What is important is seeing the dream fulfilled, not the way it happens.

Think about Joseph. We can be almost certain that Joseph never imagined that he would be sold away as a slave, work as a servant, be falsely accused, and end up a prisoner, before he was elevated to becoming the prime minister of Egypt. Similarly, think about Moses, he probably never imagined, that just one action of administering justice for his own Hebrew brother, would result in him having to spend the next 40 years in the wilderness. Suddenly, he had to go from living in the palace in Egypt to being a homeless wanderer in the wilderness of Midian. Think about David. He probably had no understanding of why he had to go through all that he did, from the time he was anointed by Prophet Samuel to the time he finally became king.

God imparts dreams, inspired pursuits, divine destinies, heavenly goals, and Spirit-born visions into our hearts. These are God-given. Do not let go of these even if the journey toward their fulfillment is difficult, different from what you expected, longer that you thought it would take. Stay the course to see His vision fulfilled.

What God is about to unfold through our lives, is not dependent on what we have, who we are, or even where we are today. God's glory in revealed through people whom the world may consider foolish, weak, unknown, despised, and nothing (1 Corinthians 1:26-31).

The "Kairos" Moment For A God-Given Vision Gets Delayed When Attempted By Self

Every time we attempt to do something in our own ability—we further delay the '*kairos*' moment. Moses attempted to go at it all by himself and it only delayed things by 40 years! He had to wait out these 40 years until the king of Egypt died.

Acts 7:29-30
29 Then, at this saying, Moses fled and became a dweller in the land of Midian, where he had two sons.
30 "And when forty years had passed, an Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire in a bush, in the wilderness of Mount Sinai."

Exodus 2:15,23
15 When Pharaoh heard of this matter, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh and dwelt in the land of Midian; and he sat down by a well.
23 Now it happened in the process of time that the king of Egypt died. Then the children of Israel groaned because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry came up to God because of the bondage.

It is almost certain that many of us will make mistakes in our journey of pursuing the fulfillment of a God-given vision. Our mistakes may cause detours, delays, disappointments, and may even bring discouragement. But we must hold on.

God can put us back on track. As we acknowledge our mistakes before God, seek His forgiveness, and ask Him to realign us; He will. God is greater than our mistakes. There is no situation too complex that He cannot resolve.

Sometimes our mistakes cause us to end up in a "net" where we feel trapped. But God can bring us out of this. *"My eyes are ever toward the LORD, For He shall pluck my feet out of the net"* (Psalm 25:15).

Sometimes our mistakes may cause us to end up in a miry pit. Some of us, through our repeated mistakes seem to go from "pit" to "pit," until we finally learn our lessons. But regardless of what brought us into the pit, our God can get us out and set us on solid ground. "*I waited patiently for the LORD; And He inclined to me, and heard my cry. He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my steps. He has put a new song in my mouth— Praise to our God; Many will see it and fear, and will trust in the LORD*" (Psalm 40:1-3).

Our mistakes cause delays, but our God is the restorer of time. He can compress into one year what may normally take many years to fulfill. He can accelerate things, so that what may take many years to accomplish are all fulfilled in a much shorter time. God is merciful. Even time that we have wasted, He can restore. "*So I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, The crawling locust, The consuming locust, and the chewing locust, My great army which I sent among you*" (Joel 2:25).

We must learn from our past mistakes, become wiser and move ahead into the future, pursuing the vision He has put in our hearts with wisdom. "*Ponder the path of your feet, and let all your ways be established*" (Proverbs 4:26).

A God-Given Vision May Not Be Understood By Everyone

Acts 7:23–25
23 "Now when he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel.
24 And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended and avenged him who was oppressed, and struck down the Egyptian.
25 For he supposed that his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand, but they did not understand.

Moses assumed that his Hebrew brethren would recognize what God had done and was doing in his life. He thought that his own people would see God's hand on his life and the purposes behind him being raised in Pharaoh's palace. But his people did not understand. Nothing seemed to trigger in their thinking that Moses' was to be their deliverer.

We see something similar in the life of the Apostle Paul. He had a powerful encounter and conversion experience. His life was radically changed. The Lord Jesus had personally appeared to him and pronounced a great calling and ministry. And yet, in the initial years, the rest of the Church seemed suspicious, perhaps even withdrew from Paul. Paul had to spend a lot of time alone. He had to stand by himself, holding on to the vision, and strengthening himself in the Lord.

Galatians 1:15-16
15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace,
16 to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood.

Even when people do not understand our God-given vision, we need to hold on to them. There are times when like the Apostle Paul we must learn not to "*immediately confer with flesh and blood*." We don't necessarily need man's approval on a vision given to us by God. We must simply hold on to the fact that God has spoken into our hearts.

Over time, let God bring confirmation to the God-given vision. He will send people who will be able to confirm what God has spoken.

Over time let God bring clarity, guidance, direction, and wisdom that are required to carry out the vision. God will send people who can counsel us, guide us, and show us how to go about practically executing the vision in our hearts. We must be receptive to what God speaks into our lives through people He sends to us.

A God-Given Vision Will Face Demonic Opposition

Nehemiah 2:18–20
18 And I told them of the hand of my God which had been good upon me, and also of the king's words that he had spoken to me. So they said, "Let us rise up and build." Then they set their hands to this good

work.
19 But when Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite official, and Geshem the Arab heard of it, they laughed at us and despised us, and said, "What is this thing that you are doing? Will you rebel against the king?"
20 So I answered them, and said to them, "The God of heaven Himself will prosper us; therefore we His servants will arise and build, but you have no heritage or right or memorial in Jerusalem."

This may seem obvious, but nevertheless needs to be stated. The devil is never happy to see someone authorized by heaven, expanding God's Kingdom, and doing damage to the works of darkness. The devil will do whatever he can to oppose, hinder, distract, and divert us away from doing the work of the Kingdom.

When Nehemiah set out to rebuild the walls of the city of Jerusalem, there were Arab and Ammonite officials who laughed at and later opposed his work. But Nehemiah had to keep his eyes on the Lord and go ahead with the work God had called him to do.

In many cases demonic opposition comes in very subtle ways that we often fail to recognize it.

Demonic opposition can come as a DISTRACTION. There may be other good things, important, or even seemingly critical things that would try to pull our attention, time, and energy. We must be discerning and remain focused on the God-given vision that was been birthed in us. Distraction breaks our focus and results in wasted time, energy, and resources.

Demonic opposition can come as a small DIVERSION. If initially we begin with a very small diversion, over time, this small diversion becomes a huge gap or distance from the original mission. Here again, it is important to constantly check ourselves and realign to the original vision God has given us. Stay aligned to His leading.

Demonic opposition can come as an internal DISPUTE or strife. Internal disputes are self-destructive. So, we must constantly guard against internal strife in our teams and ministries.

Demonic opposition can come as DISCOURAGEMENT. All of us face times of discouragement where we may feel like giving up. Sometimes even our own fellow-workers can discourage us. But the key is to learn to encourage ourselves, in God, and press on.

God is on our side, empowering us to overcome!

A God-Given Vision Is Always Bigger Than The Individual

Every God-given vision is bigger than the single individual. God never intended for that individual to fulfill a God-given vision alone.

Nehemiah 2:12
Then I arose in the night, I and a few men with me; I told no one what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem; nor was there any animal with me, except the one on which I rode.

Nehemiah 2:17-18
17 Then I said to them, "You see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lies waste, and its gates are burned with fire. Come and let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer be a reproach."
18 And I told them of the hand of my God which had been good upon me, and also of the king's words that he had spoken to me. So they said, "Let us rise up and build." Then they set their hands to this good work.

For a short time, Nehemiah carried his God-given vision in his heart and told no one about it. But then, the time came for him to share his vision with others. He had to invite other people into that vision so that together they could see it fulfilled. "*Come and let us build the wall of Jerusalem*." He talked about how God has led him thus far and inspired faith and confidence in others so that they too caught the vision and responded, "*Let us rise up and build*."

In the book of Acts and in several places in his epistles, we read about Paul's co-workers. Paul himself lists many people who were his co-workers. He uses terms such as, "*fellow prisoners," "work fellow," "partner and fellow helper," "yoke fellow," "fellow laborers," fellow servant*" (KJV) to refer to these people: Barnabas, Silas, Luke (Lucas), Andronicus, Junia, Timothy (Timotheus), Lucius, Jason, Sosipater, Titus, Clement, Epaphras, Tychicus, Aristarchus, Marcus, Justus, Philemon, Apphia, Archippus, Demas, certain "*other brethren*," those women who labored with him in the Gospel and other fellow laborers whose names are in the Book of Life.

The problem with many of us is that we do not permit other people to step into the vision God has placed in our hearts. We feel that we must do this all by ourselves. We must remember that a God-given vision is always bigger than the individual. Normally God imparts the vision to an individual, but He intends for many to engage together to carry it out. He connects other people to the same vision so that together they see it fulfilled.

Perhaps an area that we as vision-bearers need to grow in is our ability to share the vision with other people in the right manner so that they can understand and step into it. We must do this with a proper attitude. God may speak to some and they may sense a similar stirring in their hearts and step into the vision God has given us. We celebrate such. Some may listen to us but may not feel the same stirring in their hearts. We must not become

discouraged neither should we feel upset or angered with those who do not respond to our vision. God may have something else for them to be involved in.

Of course, we must be cautious and wise when we share and invite others to step into the vision God has given us. We do not want to have the wrong people in. They can destroy what God has birthed in our hearts.

Other People Find And Fulfill Their Life's Calling By Participating In A God-Given Vision

Many people find and fulfill their lives' calling as they step into and become part of a God-given vision.

In sharing our vision our agenda is not to use other people for our own interests. That is completely wrong.

In having other people step into the vision God has placed in our hearts, we have their interests in mind. We must see to it that what God has placed in their lives and what God has called them to do are fulfilled as they co-labor in the vision God has placed in our hearts.

Dreams And Visions Given To The Body Of Christ Are Interlinked

Since we are a Body, the dreams and visions that God gives to His people are interdependent and closely interlinked.

Ephesians 4:4
There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling.

We cannot fulfill our calling outside of the Body. We are all called together to the same hope.

Ephesians 4:16
From whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

Each of us supply to the other, so that we can all together build the Body.

As we step into other people's dreams and help them fulfill their vision—we will in effect carry out and fulfill God's vision for our own lives.

Ask God To Give You A Big Heart Not Just A Big Vision

Many of us have a big vision, but a small heart. There is room only for one person, that is, "self."

My heart must have room for more than just "me." A big vision requires a big heart!
We must have a heart that is big enough to provide room for everyone God has intended to be a part of the vision He has given to us.

A big heart is a heart that is free from insecurity, jealousy, competition, and self-centeredness. A big heart is a heart that recognizes and celebrates God at work in other people's lives. It is a heart that encourages and empowers others to do what God has called them to.

Reflection

1. What is the vision God has placed in your heart to build His Kingdom? What is He speaking to you in this season of life? If this is still unclear, then like Habakkuk, position yourself to hear from God. "*I will stand my watch and set myself on the rampart, and watch to see what He will say to me, and what I will answer when I am corrected*" (Habakkuk 2:1).
2. What are some of the internal and external factors that you sense God is working on presently, in your life for the unfolding of His Kingdom purposes through you? Are there things you can do to cooperate with God in seeing them progress in your life?
3. Is there room in your heart to let other people enter and work with you in fulfilling the vision God has given to you? Are there walls that you have raised up that keep people out? Would you ask the Lord to tear these walls down?

For further study on learning to discover and fulfill God's plan, please review the free APC book: "Fulfilling God's Purpose for Your Life."

For further inspiration on pursuing God's purposes, please review the free APC books: "Giving Birth to the Purposes of God" and "Don't Compromise Your Calling."

For further study on understanding times and seasons, please review the free APC book: "A Time for Every Purpose."

We Have a Vision

Written by: Chris Falson

We have a vision for this nation
We share a dream for this land
We join the angels in celebration
And by faith we speak revival to this land

Where every knee shall bow and worship You
And every tongue confess that You are Lord
Give us an open heaven
And anoint our prayers this day
And move Your sovereign hand across this nation

5. KINGDOM BUILDERS' LIFESTYLE

Matthew 5:16
Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

Who we are is more important that what we do! Our being is more important than our doing.

Often in Kingdom building, we get so preoccupied with the work we do that we forget that God is more interested in us as people, than in the work that is done through us.

Hence, this chapter is directed toward highlighting key elements on who we are and the life we live as Kingdom builders. We address three main areas: (A) Godly character (B) Spiritual maturity and (C) Stewardship.

Godly Character Is Important

What Is Character?

- Character is the nature, quality, temperament, personality, disposition, spirit, moral fiber, and make-up of who I am as a person.
- My character is who I really am as a person.
- It is not what I assume to be before others. It is not what others assume me to be.
- My character is revealed through my conduct.
- My actions or reactions in difficult and unexpected circumstances reveal my character.
- My secret choices reveal my character.
- My words, attitudes and decisions reveal my character.
- It is my value-system that influences the choices I make.

Joseph

One of the greatest examples of godly character in the Bible is Joseph. He served faithfully for about 11 years in Potiphar's house. Toward the end of this time, Joseph had progressed to a place where Potiphar had entrusted every household matter into Joseph's hands. And yet there came a very difficult time in Joseph's life. Here is the narrative:

Genesis 39:1–12
1 Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. And Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him down there.

2 The Lord was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.
3 And his master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord made all he did to prosper in his hand.
4 So Joseph found favor in his sight, and served him. Then he made him overseer of his house, and all that he had he put under his authority.
5 So it was, from the time that he had made him overseer of his house and all that he had, that the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the Lord was on all that he had in the house and in the field.
6 Thus he left all that he had in Joseph's hand, and he did not know what he had except for the bread which he ate. Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance.
7 And it came to pass after these things that his master's wife cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, "Lie with me."
8 But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Look, my master does not know what is with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand.
9 There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"
10 So it was, as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he did not heed her, to lie with her or to be with her.
11 But it happened about this time, when Joseph went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the house was inside,
12 that she caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me." But he left his garment in her hand, and fled and ran outside.

The power to say, "No" comes from a strong character (Vs 8).

Your conscience will keep you accountable to God even when no one is watching (Vs 9).

The ability to say, "No" when temptation persists is possible only when you have a strong character (Vs 10).

A strong character cannot be weakened and will not give into continual temptation (Vs 10).

How Is Character Developed?

What influences or shapes the development of an individual's character? Daniel is another great example in the Bible, of a man with strong moral character. We will examine Daniel's life to see how God developed character in him.

Daniel

Daniel, most probably born in Jerusalem, belonged to the tribe of Judah, and was taken to Babylon as part of the captives from Jerusalem. Daniel and his three friends must have been in their early teens when they were taken in for training at Babylon. Daniel lived and

served in the courts of several kings from three empires: Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar (Babylonian kings), Darius (Medes), and later Cyrus (Persian king). His life challenged these powerful kings and got them to acknowledge that the God of the Hebrews is truly God.

- Daniel's character began to be developed from an early age as he stood by his convictions (Daniel 1:8). God honored the stand Daniel that his friends took.

Daniel 1:8
But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

It is never too early to start working on developing godly character.

- A man's companions influence his character.

Daniel 2:17
Then Daniel went to his house, and made the decision known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions.

1 Corinthians 15:33
Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits."

- Strong moral character is built over time through discipline and practice.

Daniel 6:10
Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.

- Strong moral character is strengthened through adversity.

Romans 5:3-4
3 And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance;
4 And perseverance, character; and character, hope.

Why Is Character Important?

Godly Character Is a Prerequisite for Kingdom Ministry

When the Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy and Titus on appointing spiritual leaders, the qualifications he listed emphasized the importance of character and lifestyle over gifting.

Anointing and gifting are important, but they must not cause us to neglect character and

lifestyle.

1 Timothy 3:1–15
1 This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work.
2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach;
3 Not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous;
4 One who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence
5 (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?);
6 not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil.
7 Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.
8 Likewise deacons must be reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money,
9 holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience.
10 But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless.
11 Likewise, their wives must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things.
12 Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.
13 For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.
14 These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly;
15 But if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

Titus 1:5–9
5 For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you—
6 If a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination.
7 For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money,
8 but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled,
9 holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.

1 Peter 5:1–4
1 The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed:
2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly;
3 nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock;
4 and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.

A godly character is the foundation for ministry—for all Kingdom building work.

The true strength of our ministry is not our anointing but our character.

Matthew 9:17
Nor do they put new wine into old wineskins, or else the wineskins break, the wine is spilled, and the

wineskins are ruined. But they put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved.

The anointing is the wine; our character is the wineskin. If the wineskin is weak and breaks (or even leaks) the anointing will be wasted.

We have heard it stated before—Your gift can take you where your character cannot keep you. We need the strength of character to help us sustain the heights that the Spirit brings us into.

Your Moral Character Is Your True Strength

A man's real strength is his moral character.

Your inner strength—your moral character—determines your ability to withstand temptations, accusations, persecutions, seductions, lies, and other pressures.

Your Character Will Shape the Most Important Message You Will Ever Preach

1 Thessalonians 1:5-6
5 For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.
6 And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit.

1 Thessalonians 2:1–10
1 For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain.
2 But even after we had suffered before and were spitefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict.
3 For our exhortation did not come from error or uncleanness, nor was it in deceit.
4 But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts.
5 For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness—God is witness.
6 Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ.
7 But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children.
8 So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us.
9 For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God.
10 You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe.

Your life speaks.

The greatest message you will ever preach is the life you live.

While people may forget most of the sermons we preach, they will remember the life we lived.

The man is more than the message. Your message is credible because you are credible. When a man is no longer credible, his message is suspect—Dr. Edwin LouisCole.

Character Determines Your Durability

Fame can come in a moment, but true greatness comes with longevity—Dr. Edwin Louis Cole.

Great men are those who sustain their achievements over years, regardless of what the years bring—Dr. Edwin Louis Cole.

Spiritual Maturity—As Important As Spiritual Gifting

What is spiritual maturity? What does it mean to be spiritually mature? How do we assess if we are truly maturing spiritually?

There are three Greek words that are used often in the New Testament in the context of spiritual maturity. These three Greek words are usually translated as "complete" in English, but examining their Greek meaning provides additional insight:

'*Teleios*' = Complete—of full age, mature, a perfect man. It literally means full age or to grow up, to be an adult. It is used often in the context of maturity. A person of full age or perfect or complete man. It refers to growth in both mental and moral character.

'*Pleero*' = to fill up, to be full of, diffuse, to be under the influence of. It is also translated as "complete," but it literally means to fill up.

'*Katartiz*' = to complete thoroughly, thorough equipping. It is often translated as "complete," but its literal meaning is to be thoroughly equipped.

Seven Characteristics Of Spiritual Maturity

We trace the use of these three Greek words in the New Testament and identify seven characteristics of spiritual maturity.

Spiritual Maturity Is Growing in Christlikeness

Matthew 5:48
Therefore you shall be perfect (*teleios*)**, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.**

Jesus challenged us to be full-grown people, people who are mature, and of full age (adults) because that is how God is! God is not childish!

Ephesians 4:13
Till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect *(teleios)* **man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.**

Being a spiritually perfect man, a mature man means that we come to the full stature of the fullness of Christ. Spiritual maturity is growth in Christlikeness.

We are called to grow up in ALL THINGS into Christlikeness (Ephesians 4:15). All areas of our lives must be aligned to who He is. Christ must be made manifest in all areas of our lives.

This is what God is working to accomplish in us. Hence as we journey with God, we must keep this as our focus—we as individuals are growing into Christlikeness in all areas of our lives.

Colossians 1:28-29
28 Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect *(teleios)* **in Christ Jesus.**
29 To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.

This is the goal of Christian ministry—to present each person of full age (mature, adult) in Christ.

Spiritual Maturity Is Being Perfect And Complete In All The Will Of God

Colossians 4:12
Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect (*teleios*) **and complete** (*pleero*) **in all the will of God.**

In every area we are to be fully aligned to the will of God.

We need to be fully grown, fully developed with nothing lacking, no shortfall, in the will of God for our lives.

As we progressively surrender and bring all areas of our lives into alignment to the will of God and grow in those areas, we know we are growing up spiritually.

Spiritual Maturity Is Being Thoroughly Equipped For Every Good Work

Growth in spiritual maturity is to progressively become thoroughly equipped for every good work that God has ordained for our lives.

2 Corinthians 13:9,11
9 For we are glad when we are weak and you are strong. And this also we pray, that you may be made complete (*katartizo*)**.**
11 Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete (*katartizo*). **Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.**

From the verse above, we learn that we can (must) pray for believers to become fully equipped. Notice, also that there is the injunction to become complete, or fully equipped. This leaves responsibility on us to do what it takes to equip ourselves and journey toward spiritual maturity.

Hebrews 13:20-21
20 Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,
21 Make you complete (*katartizo*) **in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.**

Here again, the prayer is for God to work in the believer bringing about full equipping to carry out every good work according to His will. This equipping happens as God works in us enabling us to do what is well pleasing in His sight.

We cannot receive equipping to WORK OUT every good work, apart from His WORK IN us bringing about what is well pleasing in His sight.

Luke 6:40
A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained (*katartizo*) **will be like his teacher.**

The Lord Jesus desires that all of us, His disciples, be like Him. For us to be like our Teacher, we need to go through a process of thorough training and equipping.

Ephesians 4:11-12
11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,
12 For the equipping *(katartismos*) **of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.**

One of the functions of the five-fold ministry is the thorough equipping of the saints for the work of ministry in the Body of Christ.

Spiritual Maturity Is Having Ability To Receive Solid Meat

Hebrews 5:11–14
11 Of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.
12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food.

13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.
14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age (*teleios*)**, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.**

Hebrews 6:1–3
1 Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection (*teleiotes*)**, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,**
2 Of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.
3 And this we will do if God permits.

1 Corinthians 2:6-7
6 However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature (*teleios*)**, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing.**
7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory.

Those who are mature, of full age, can receive solid food. These are people who have gone past the basics, the elementary principles and are pressing forward toward maturity, becoming of full age. These are people who are able to receive wisdom and understand the mysteries of the Kingdom of God.

Spiritual Maturity Is Having Our Senses Trained to Discern Good and Evil

Hebrews 5:14
But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Those who are of full age are people who have their senses (soul) trained to discern what is good and what is evil. Their soul (mind, will, and emotions) have been tempered by the truth that they are constantly working with and so has become trained in knowing right and wrong.

Spiritual Maturity Is Putting Away Childish Behavior

1 Corinthians 13:11
When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

1 Corinthians 3:1–4
1 And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ.
2 I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able;
3 For you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?
4 For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not carnal?

As we become spiritually mature, we put away childish way of understanding, thinking,

and speaking.

We cannot remain childish in our thoughts, understanding, and words.

To be carnal is being childish. Envy, division, strife, competition, and selfish ambition are all various forms of childish behavior.

Spiritual Maturity Is Having Your Whole Body and Tongue In Control

James 3:2
For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect (*teleios*) **man, able also to bridle the whole body.**

A spiritually mature person has self-governing ability—the ability to keep their body and tongue in control.

Self-control, which really is a result of the work of the Spirit in our lives (Galatians 5:22-23; 2 Timothy 1:7), is a sign of spiritual maturity.

The book of Proverbs teaches us about the importance of self-control: "*He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city*" (Proverbs 16:32). "*A person without self-control is like a house with its doors and windows knocked out*" (Proverbs 25:28, Message Bible).

Spiritual maturity is a process. It does not happen instantly. It takes time. We journey with God as He works in us by His Word, His Spirit, through other people, and through life's experiences. We must constantly progress in spiritual maturity.

Kingdom Stewardship

1 Corinthians 4:1-2
1 Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.
2 Moreover, it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.

1 Peter 4:10
As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

Titus 1:7
For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money.

We are stewards of God.

Leadership requires stewardship which is expressed through how we live and conduct ourselves.

Stewardship must be a way of life, as leaders in God's Kingdom and as Kingdom builders.

We are stewards of the mysteries of God. We are stewards of the gifts and grace given to us by God.

What does it mean to be a steward of God?

Steward (Gr.) *'oikonomos'* = the manager of a household or estate, governor, treasurer.

This word comes from two root words, 'o*ikos'* = house, *'nomos'* = a law.

Stewardship (Gr.) *'oikonomia'* = the management of a household, administration.

We find the words *'oikonomos'* and *'oikonomia'* used in Luke 16:2-4; 1 Corinthians 9:17; Colossians 1:25; Ephesians 3:2,9; Ephesians 1:10; Romans 16:23; Galatians 4:1-2; 1 Timothy 1:4.

A steward is a manager, overseer, or caretaker.

- Someone who has been put in charge of another person's goods.
- Someone made responsible for something that is not their own.
- Someone entrusted with the responsibility to manage.

A steward must ensure that:

- Things are functioning properly.
- Things are profitable.
- Everything is accounted for.
- He must protect and safeguard what is in his care.
- He must ensure continuity, i.e., train up a successor.

What are we stewards of in God's Kingdom?

- The Gospel (1 Corinthians 9:16-17).
- The mysteries of God (Ephesians 3:9; 1 Corinthians 4:1; Colossians 1:26–29; 1 Corinthians 2:7; 2 Corinthians 2:17; 2 Corinthians 4:1-2). We are stewards of the revelation that has been given to us.
- The gifts of grace that are given to us (1 Peter 4:10-11).

- The grace of God given to us for a specific mission (Ephesians 3:1-2).

Characteristics Of A Good Steward In God's Kingdom

As a steward of the grace of God and of the work of God's Kingdom, this is what the Lord is expecting of us:

A Good Steward Ensures Proper Functioning

We are responsible for the proper functioning of the work entrusted to us. Everything must be in order and beyond reproach. "*We give no offense in anything, that our ministry may not be blamed. But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God*..." (2 Corinthians 6:3-4).

A Good Steward Ensures Profitability

We must ensure that we are being fruitful in the work we are doing. We must be fruitful. *"By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples"* (John 15:8).

We need to frequently assess the work we do to see if there is fruit being borne. If we are not being fruitful, we need to ask the right questions and see what changes need to be made to ensure that we do bear fruit.

A Good Steward Ensures Accountability

We are accountable to God, answerable to God, for everything that goes on in the work entrusted to us. We conduct ourselves and carry out Kingdom work with a deep sense of accountability, both here and now, and in time to come when we will stand before His throne. *"Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad"* (2 Corinthians 5:9-10).

A steward who is found wasteful or unproductive, will be released from being a steward over what has been entrusted to him. *"He also said to His disciples: "There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and an accusation was brought to him that this man was wasting his goods. So he called him and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward"* (Luke 16:1-2).

A Good Steward Ensures Security

We must guard and protect what God has entrusted to us.

Proper administration must ensure that there is no misuse, no theft, or misappropriation of what has been entrusted in our care.

A Good Steward Ensures Continuity

A steward was often responsible for nurturing the heir of the household. "*Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all, but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father*" (Galatians 4:1-2).

We must pass on what God has given to us, in a condition that is better and stronger than what we began with.

A Good Steward Is Faithful and Wise

Luke 12:41–48
41 Then Peter said to Him, "Lord, do You speak this parable only to us, or to all people?"
42 And the Lord said, "Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season?
43 Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes.
44 Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has.
45 But if that servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and be drunk,
46 The master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.
47 And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.
48 But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.

Proper stewardship brings promotion and greater level of stewardship where we are entrusted with more. "*Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household*, . . ." (Vs 42).

Stewardship is not doing what we like but is knowing what the Master likes and doing according to that. *"And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes"* (Vs 47).

1 Timothy 1:12
And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into

the ministry.

We need to be faithful and wise as stewards. Faithfulness has with it the essence of sincerity, dependability, and being trustworthy.

The Unjust Steward

Here is another illustration that the Lord Jesus used to teach about stewardship.

Luke 16:1–12
1 He also said to His disciples: "There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and an accusation was brought to him that this man was wasting his goods.
2 So he called him and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.'
3 "Then the steward said within himself, 'What shall I do? For my master is taking the stewardship away from me. I cannot dig; I am ashamed to beg.
4 I have resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.'
5 "So he called every one of his master's debtors to him, and said to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?'
6 And he said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' So he said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.'
7 Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' So he said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' And he said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.'
8 So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light.
9 "And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home.
10 He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.
11 Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?
12 And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own?

The Lord Jesus is not commending the steward for what he did. He is still called "the unjust steward" or "crooked manager." What the Lord commended was the fact that the steward acted wisely or in a prudent manner, that showed foresight and thoughtfulness. He used his position and money to build friendships so that when he was dismissed from his position, at least those he "helped" would in turn help him out. He then went on to state some important things about stewardship.

A Good Steward Is Faithful in Little Things

Stewardship is demonstrated by how we handle little things. Do we work with care and diligence when what we have is small, or do we treat things lightly? "*He who is faithful in what is least is faithful in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much*"

(Vs 10).

Faithfulness in little things is what qualifies us to be set over bigger things.

A Good Steward Is Faithful in Handling Money

Often, we take handling money very lightly, as we consider it "*unrighteous mammon*" and perhaps something God does not pay attention to. However, God looks at how we handle the money we have been entrusted with.

Interestingly, the Lord Jesus stated that the proper handling of money, qualifies us to be entrusted with true riches—the things of God's Kingdom. "*Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?"* (Vs 11).

A Good Steward Is Faithful in What Is Another Man's

Handling what is someone else's with a proper sense of stewardship, qualifies us to be entrusted with what is our own. *"And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own?"* (Vs 12).

Stewardship brings with it a sense of responsibility. *"For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship"* (1 Corinthians 9:17).

Stewardship calls for sacrifice. *"I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church, of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God"* (Colossians 1:24-25).

Reflection

1. Are there areas in your personal moral character that need strengthening? What can you do to strengthen yourself in these areas?
2. In the light of the seven characteristics of spiritual maturity, what are areas of spiritual growth you feel you need to pay more attention to?
3. You have been entrusted with the work of God's Kingdom. In the Kingdom work you are currently engaged in, how can you better your stewardship? How can you be a better steward?

For further study on issues regarding a minister's personal life and character, please review the free APC book: "Code of Honor."

Let the Beauty of Jesus Be Seen in Me

Written By: Albert Orsborn

Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me,
All His wonderful passion and purity;
O Thou spirit Divine, all my nature refine,
Till the beauty of Jesus be seen in me.

6. Building People By The Spirit

2 Corinthians 3:3
clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart.

In this chapter, we address the core of Kingdom work, which is building people. Kingdom building is not about building an organization although in the process of doing Kingdom work, we may develop strong organizations. Kingdom building is not about putting up big physical buildings or having perfectly organized programs, events, and conferences, although we may do all these things. Kingdom building is about building people.

Kingdom Building Is About Building People

1 Corinthians 3:9
For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building.

The Apostle Paul identified himself as a co-worker with God, a Kingdom builder. God's people are the "field" and the "building" that he is working on together with God.

1 Corinthians 9:1
Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord?

The Apostle Paul could have pointed to the many missionary journeys he made, the many churches he established, the many sermons he preached or the epistles he had written as his work in the Lord. Yet he points to people, as his work in the Lord. "Are YOU not my work in the Lord?"

Ephesians 2:22
In whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

God is not constructing a building or developing an organization. He is building people. God's people are being built together as His dwelling place.

1 Peter 2:5
You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

This spiritual house is a house made with living stones—God's people.

Working with "living stones" is different from working with "dead stones!" Stones have no feelings, living stones do. Stones do not grow, while living stones do. Stones do not move, living stones do.

Kingdom Builders Must Have People In Their Hearts

1 Corinthians 7:3
I do not say this to condemn; for I have said before that you are in our hearts, to die together and to live together.

Paul had the people he ministered to, in his heart. He treasured and valued them. He held them dear to the point where he was willing to live or die together for them.

1 Thessalonians 2:19-20
19 For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?
20 For you are our glory and joy.

When Paul would stand before the Lord on that final day, he would not boast about all the great things he did, the journeys he made, books he wrote, etc. Rather, he would boast in the people whom he served. The people he served were his joy, his crown, his glory, what he would celebrate and boast about.

What do we take "pride" in, our accomplishments, or in the people we serve?

2 Corinthians 3:1–3
1 Do we begin again to commend ourselves? Or do we need, as some others, epistles of commendation to you or letters of commendation from you?
2 You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men;
3 Clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart.

Notice what Paul said. The people he ministered to were written in his heart. He carried them in his heart. This was evident to everyone. Now that he carried them in his heart, he was able also to write into their hearts by the enabling of the Holy Spirit.

It is only when we allow God to write people on our hearts that He gives us the ability to write into their hearts. All other ministry, apart from this, is merely an outward form without the power to transform lives.

We Build People By The Spirit

2 Corinthians 3:1–3
1 Do we begin again to commend ourselves? Or do we need, as some others, epistles of commendation to you or letters of commendation from you?

2 You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men;
3 clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart.

We write into people's hearts "*not with ink, but by the Spirit of the living God*." We do not use natural means to affect the heart of people. In fact, we cannot. It is only by the empowering of God's Spirit that we can see God's work established in the hearts and lives of people.

John 6:63
It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.

It is the work of the Spirit that produces life—things that bring about permanent change and transformation in the lives of people. Our dependence must be on the work of the Spirit, not on carnal (flesh) methods.

God Uses Imperfect People To Perfect Imperfect People

Proverbs 27:17
As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.

Just because God uses me to perfect someone else, does not mean that I am perfect!

We just make ourselves available to God to work through us to sharpen other lives. In a similar manner, we must remain open to what God seeks to do in us through others, whoever He chooses.

Practical Keys To Building People By The Spirit

We share some practical keys in building people by the Spirit with a focus on nurturing them to enter into and fulfill God's purpose and plan for their lives.

Recognize God's Purpose for the Individual

Do not fight God's plans and purposes, by building the individual into something God did not design them to be.

Discern their God-appointed place.

1 Corinthians 12:18
But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased.

Discern their God-appointed function.

Romans 12:4–6
4 For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function,
5 so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.
6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith.

This is an awesome responsibility that you have—to help people discover their God-appointed purpose and help them move toward fulfilling that. You must be extremely sensitive to the leading of God's Spirit in this.

Jesus was able to discern people by the Spirit.

In the Case of Peter

John 1:41-42
41 He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated, the Christ).
42 And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, "You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas" (which is translated, A Stone).

In the Case of Nathanael

John 1:47
Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit."

By the Spirit, see and understand the individual's future, train them for it and release them into it, at the right time.

Position People to Release Divine Potential

People need to be positioned—set in their God-appointed place, season by season, so that they can be developed into what God wants them to become.

In the Case of Moses and Joshua

Deuteronomy 1:38
Joshua the son of Nun, who stands before you, he shall go in there. Encourage him, for he shall cause Israel to inherit it.

Deuteronomy 3:28
But command Joshua, and encourage him and strengthen him; for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which you will see.

In the Case of Barnabas and Saul

Acts 11:25-26
25 Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Saul.
26 And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.

Paul, Barnabas, and John Mark

Sometimes, we could make mistakes in discerning God's potential in an individual, as Paul did initially for John Mark and later had to change.

Acts 13:13
Now when Paul and his party set sail from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia; and John, departing from them, returned to Jerusalem.

Acts 15:36–41
36 Then after some days Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us now go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they are doing."
37 Now Barnabas was determined to take with them John called Mark.
38 But Paul insisted that they should not take with them the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work.
39 Then the contention became so sharp that they parted from one another. And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus;
40 but Paul chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of God.
41 And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

Colossians 4:10
Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, with Mark the cousin of Barnabas (about whom you received instructions: if he comes to you, welcome him).

1 Timothy 4:11
Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry.

Discover and Develop Their Gifting

We need to encourage people in their areas of grace and gifting.

We may need to restrain people from going into areas that are not their areas of grace and gifting. As humans, we have a natural tendency to desire things that someone else has.

1 Timothy 4:14
Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership.

Timothy 1:6-7
6 Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.
7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

Nurture Life to Life

Philippians 4:9
The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

1 Corinthians 4:16
Therefore I urge you, imitate me.

1 Corinthians 11:1
Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.

The greatest message you will ever preach is the life you live.

Matthew 5:19
Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

You must be doing it before you begin teaching it.

Matthew 15:14
Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch."

You cannot lead people into revelation that you have not received yourself. If you attempt to do so, it would be like the blind leading the blind. Both end up in the ditch!

You cannot give something you do not have.

You cannot take others to places where you have not gone yourself.

You cannot enable people to mature in Christlikeness if you are not maturing into Christlikeness yourself.

You cannot administer liberty in areas where you are held in bondage yourself.

Avoid Insecurities

Some of the biggest problems that leaders have in relating to people are born out of insecurity.

Insecure leaders become jealous of other people, control other people, become over-involved in people's lives, authoritative/ dictatorial, and so on. Guard yourself from these pitfalls.

Avoid Jealousy

The examples of Saul and David

1 Samuel 18:6–11
6 Now it had happened as they were coming home, when David was returning from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women had come out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with joy, and with musical instruments.
7 So the women sang as they danced, and said: "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands."
8 Then Saul was very angry, and the saying displeased him; and he said, "They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed only thousands. Now what more can he have but the kingdom?"
9 So Saul eyed David from that day forward.
10 And it happened on the next day that the distressing spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied inside the house. So David played music with his hand, as at other times; but there was a spear in Saul's hand.
11 And Saul cast the spear, for he said, "I will pin David to the wall!" But David escaped his presence twice.

1 John 4:20-21
20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?
21 And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also.

Maintain a pure heart that is not only right toward God, but also toward people.

Avoid Being Overprotective/Being Controlling

1 Corinthians 11:1–4
1 Oh, that you would bear with me in a little folly—and indeed you do bear with me.
2 For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.
3 But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.
4 For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it!

2 Corinthians 1:24
Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are fellow workers for your joy; for by faith you stand.

There is a balance between being "jealous over people with a godly jealousy"—which is a healthy thing and learning not to dominate their faith and walk with God.

Avoid Over-Involvement

Teach people what is right and what is wrong and allow them to make their decisions. Don't make decisions for people, otherwise they will never grow up and learn to make decisions on their own.

Don't become a crutch that people must lean on. Teach people to stand on their own. They must be able to live life, discipline themselves, and manage things, without you being around!

Avoid Being Overly Authoritative

1 Peter 5:1–4
1 The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed:
2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly;
3 nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock;
4 and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.

1 Corinthians 9:18
What is my reward then? That when I preach the gospel, I may present the gospel of Christ without charge, that I may not abuse my authority in the gospel.

Corinthians 10:8
For even if I should boast somewhat more about our authority, which the Lord gave us for edification and not for your destruction, I shall not be ashamed.

2 Corinthians 12:18-19
18 I urged Titus, and sent our brother with him. Did Titus take advantage of you? Did we not walk in the same spirit? Did we not walk in the same steps?
19 Again, do you think that we excuse ourselves to you? We speak before God in Christ. But we do all things, beloved, for your edification.

Avoid Emotional Attachments

Sometimes we get attached emotionally with those we are raising up in the Lord. Then, when the time comes to release them, we are unwilling to let them go, because of "soulish" (emotional) attachments. This is a dangerous thing.

1 Samuel 18:1 shows that David and Jonathan had a special friendship. Yet, when it was time to send him away, Jonathan did so (1 Samuel 20).

Bring Correction When Required

1 Corinthians 4:21
What do you want? Shall I come to you with a rod, or in love and a spirit of gentleness?

1 Corinthians 7:11-12
11 For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter.
12 Therefore, although I wrote to you, I did not do it for the sake of him who had done the wrong, nor for the sake of him who suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear to you.

2 Corinthians 13:10
Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the authority which the Lord has given me for edification and not for destruction.

Too often, we avoid confrontation because we do not want to risk the possibility of hurting a relationship.

Proverbs 27:6
Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.

We must have the inner strength to bring correction in a loving manner. Understand that in bringing correction into an individual's life, we are doing more good than harm. The problem that we may decide to ignore could become the very thing that could destroy that person or become a problem to others.

Don't delay in bringing correction.

Once we speak correction, allow the person the liberty of responding to God. We are not responsible for the pain of those who have ignored our counsel.

Proverbs 17:9
He who covers a transgression seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates friends.

Once we bring correction, remember not to keep talking about the other person's mistake.

When bringing correction, do it for the individual's edification and not destruction.

Bring Correction with Gentleness

Bringing correction in a loving way is not always easy because of all the emotions (being upset, angered, agitated, and so on) that is usually part of the whole situation. However,

we must allow the Holy Spirit to help us flow in gentleness, kindness, and goodness even in a difficult situation.

Galatians 5:22
But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness…

2 Corinthians 6:6
…by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love…

1 Thessalonians 2:7
But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children.

1 Timothy 2:24
And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient…

Titus 3:2
to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men.

James 3:17
But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.

Beseeching Versus Commanding

Beseech

There are about 24 references in all, in the epistles where Paul and other ministers "beseech" their listeners to follow a certain instruction (Romans 12:1; Romans 15:30; Romans 16:17; 1 Corinthians 1:10; 1 Corinthians 4:16; 1 Corinthians 16:15; 2 Corinthians 2:8; 2 Corinthians 6:1-2; Corinthians 10:1-2; Galatians 4:12; Ephesians 4:1; Philippians 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 4:1; 1 Thessalonians 4:10; 1 Thessalonians 5:12; 2 Thessalonians 2:1; Philemon 1:9-10; Hebrews 13:19; Hebrews 13:22; 1 Peter 2:11; 2 John 1:5)

Greek words for "beseech:"

Gr. *'parakaleo'* = to call near, that is, invite, invoke, exhort, intreat, pray.

Gr. *'erotao'* = to interrogate, to request, ask, beseech, desire, intreat, pray.

Some Examples

Romans 16:17
Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.

Philippians 4:2
I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord.

Philemon 1:9-10
9 Yet for love's sake I rather appeal to you—being such a one as Paul, the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ—
10 I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten while in my chains…

Command

As ministers of God there are times when we will have to "command and teach" people. We use our spiritual authority to require people to follow God's directives.

1 Timothy 4:11
These things command and teach.

Command Gr. *'paraggello'* = to transmit a message, that is to enjoin, to charge, to command.

However, in the epistles, Paul uses "commanding" very sparingly (four times), when compared to "beseeching" people (about 20 times). This tells us that the normal way to instruct, guide, and correct people is through gently beseeching them. On rare occasions, you "command" them.

1 Corinthians 7:10
Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from her husband.

1 Thessalonians 3:4,6,12
4 And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, both that you do and will do the things we command you.
6 But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us.
12 Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread.

Handling Immature Responses

Typically, when we do bring correction, some people may receive it well. Others may not receive it well. They may respond negatively. Receiving negative responses from the very ones we love, from the ones whom we are building by the Spirit could be one of the most painful moments of our lives as ministers of God. We are doing our best for them, holding their future in our hearts, and yet they respond negatively because of the pain of the correction that has been brought.

Here are some kinds of negative responses we may receive:

- **Complaining**—All of a sudden, the world becomes totally different to the individual who has received correction. What was so wonderful and beautiful, suddenly becomes a wilderness or a desert place! The individual begins to complain about every little thing. Little incidents of the past are "resurrected" and become big issues. Everything we do seem to be directed toward putting them down, restricting them, controlling them, or hurting them.

- **Withdrawal**—The individual who was corrected withdraws, disconnects, and hides away in a shell. There is no longer freedom in interaction and communication. We must tiptoe around the person, to make sure we do nothing to hurt that individual. They are no longer able to receive anything from us spiritually.

- **Retaliation**—The individual begins to blame us for their problems, disappointments, or dissatisfactions. Suddenly, the respect and honor they had for us becomes a thing of the past.

Matthew 13:57
So they were offended at Him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house."

Psalm 41:9
Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.

- **Departure**—The individual suddenly disappears and vanishes with no prior notification. They carry their problems to another ministry where they can be pampered for a season until the whole baggage of unresolved issues opens up again.

What Should We Do in Such Situations?

Do Not Take it Personal

Someone else's inability to receive correction is just that. They are unable to receive correction and hence are reacting. It is no indication of who we are or our ability as ministers of God.

Take No Offense. Guard Your Heart.

Galatians 4:11-12
11 I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain.
12 Brethren, I urge you to become like me, for I became like you. You have not injured me at all.

Paul was in a situation where after he had labored much among the Galatians, it appeared that his labor was going to go in vain. He had preached the Gospel to them. After his departure, some others had come in and wanted the Galatians to go back into bondage, by keeping the law. Paul's handling of the situation is exemplary—something we can follow.

"It is not a personal matter. I have no cause of complaint. You have done me no personal wrong. There is no variance between us; no unkind feeling; no injury done as individuals. I may, therefore, with the more freedom, ask you to yield this point, when I assure you that I do not feel personally injured. I have no wrong to complain of, and I ask it on higher grounds than would be an individual request: it is for your good, and the good of the great cause." When Christians turn away from the truth, and disregard the instructions and exhortations of pastors, and become conformed to the world, it is not a personal matter, or a matter of personal offense to them, painful as it may be to them. They have no special reason to say that they are personally injured. It is a higher matter. The cause suffers. The interests of religion are injured. The church at large is offended, and the Savior is "wounded in the house of his friends." Conformity to the world, or a lapse into some sin, is a public offence, and should be regarded as an injury done to the cause of the Redeemer. It shows the magnanimity of Paul, that though they had abandoned his doctrines, and forgotten his love and his toils in their welfare, he did not regard it as a personal offense, and did not consider himself personally injured. An ambitious man or an impostor would have made that the main, if not the only thing" (Barnes Commentary. Albert Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Albert Barnes, 1798-1870).

Give Time for People to Change

People need time to come to terms with things that need to be dealt with.

Allow Them to Move on in Peace

Release them into God's hands. After all, it is only God who can work in them to bring about growth and maturity.

Bring Maturity in All Areas

Our goal in building people by the Spirit, is to help develop maturity in all areas of Christian living.

Ephesians 4:13–15
13 Till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;
14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,
15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ.

God has given us His Word and His Spirit to help accomplish this.

Too often, we make the mistake of emphasizing majorly in gifts and callings and forget about character issues and all the other practical aspects—relating to people, managing time and money, being a good spouse, balancing work, and rest, and so on.

Dealing with character issues:

- Learn to relate to people apart from their gifts. Don't always talk about the person's calling and gift. People tend to hide behind their gift and calling, and hence neglect more important character issues.
- Deal with heart issues. Example: rejection, insecurities, emotional hurts, inward rebellion (sometimes people may not necessarily be outwardly rebellious, but they are inwardly rebellious), and so on.
- Deal with personality issues. Example: short temper, not being able to relate to people, independence, and so on.
- Deal with lifestyle and habits. Example: importance of maintaining a good testimony, managing time, money, and so on.
- Identify and break limitations that they have put on themselves.
- Identify and break cycles of failure (leaving churches and ministries periodically).

Release Them into Their Calling

As people grow and mature, we must have the grace to release them into their calling.

1 Timothy 1:3
As I urged you when I went into Macedonia—remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine.

Titus 1:4-5
4 To Titus, a true son in our common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior.
5 For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you.

They must have the liberty to fly on their own.

Continue to Be Their Spiritual Support When Needed

When we release people, we do not abandon them—rather we continue to be available for their spiritual support and encouragement.

1 Corinthians 12:14-15
14 Now for the third time I am ready to come to you. And I will not be burdensome to you; for I do not seek yours, but you. For the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.
15 And I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved.

Restoring Those Who Fall

Galatians 6:1
Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.

1 John 5:14–16
14 Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.
15 And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.
16 If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin which does not lead to death, he will ask, and He will give him life for those who commit sin not leading to death. There is sin leading to death. I do not say that he should pray about that.

Too often we end up killing our wounded. Instead, we must learn to lovingly restore those who make mistakes and fall.

Handling Those Who Fall Away

Some may fall away from the call of God.

Philemon 1:24
… as do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow laborers.

2 Timothy 4:10
… for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica—Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia.

Some may make shipwreck of their faith and become your most eminent opposition.

1 Timothy 1:19-20
19 …having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck,
20 of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.

1 Timothy 4:14-15
14 Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. May the Lord repay him according to his works.
15 You also must beware of him, for he has greatly resisted our words.

Reflection

1. In your journey thus far, reflect on your experience of building people by Spirit. What have been the positive outcomes and some of the negatives? Try and distill some key learning from those experiences.

For further study on working with People in Kingdom building, please review the free APC book: “Code of Honor.”

For I’m Building a People of Power

Written by: Dave Richards

For I’m building a people of power
For I’m making a people of praise
That will move through this land by My Spirit
And will glorify
My precious Name
Build Your church Lord Make us strong Lord
Join our hearts Lord
Through Your Son Make us one Lord
In Your body
In the kingdom of Your Son

7. PARTNERSHIP—CO-WORKERS IN THE KINGDOM

1 Corinthians 3:6-8
6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.
7 So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.
8 Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor.

1 Corinthians 3:9a
For we are God's fellow workers;...

Since we are all co-workers with God, we are also co-workers with each other, in the Kingdom of God.

A whole lot more can be accomplished around the world, for the advancement of the Kingdom of God, through partnership.

Dreams and visions given to the Body of Christ are interconnected and interlinked. For us to successfully fulfill our God-given dream, we will most often need to partner and work with several others in the Kingdom of God.

In God's army, unfortunately conflict happens between His soldiers, perhaps worst between God's generals themselves. The real enemy often has little work to do. The adversary remains a spectator, as we work overtime to destroy each other. Sometimes we pull away and become lone rangers, not realizing that Christ's Body is not a one-man army.

A Kingdom That Is Divided Is Weak And Powerless

Mark 3:24
If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.

A lot is being left undone because of our unwillingness to partner with each other.

Our unwillingness to partner becomes a hindrance to Kingdom advancement.

We Are Called To Maintain Unity In The Spirit

Ephesians 4:3
Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Philippians 2:1
Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy.

Two of the important characteristics of a genuine work of the Spirit, of true Kingdom building work are the unity and fellowship of the Spirit that it promotes. True Kingdom building work always results in strengthening the unity of the Spirit and fellowship of the Spirit.

Luke 9:49-50
49 Now John answered and said, "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow with us."
50 But Jesus said to him, "Do not forbid him, for he who is not against us is on our side."

Just because someone is not part of "our group" it does not mean that they are not doing Kingdom work!

Being Kingdom Minded

Deuteronomy 22:10
You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together.

We will all have to have the same mindset if we are to work together. If we are all Kingdom minded, it will be easy to flow together, advance the Kingdom, and strengthen unity and fellowship in the Spirit. However, if only some of us are Kingdom minded, and others are more interested in pursuing personal or denominational agendas, it is like plowing with an ox and donkey together!

Amos 3:3
Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?

1 Corinthians 1:10
Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

What can we all agree about? Although as ministers of Christ we may come from different denominational affiliations and even cultural contexts, we can all agree on the core essentials of the faith—on who Christ is, His finished work on the Cross, His death and resurrection, His soon return, and the Great Commission He has left us with. We can all have this one mind—that whatever we do, we seek the advancement of Christ's Kingdom.

We can all become Kingdom minded.

Put The Growth Of God's Kingdom Ahead Of Personal Ministry Advancement

Matthew 6:10
Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

There is a tremendous need for a change in our mindset, a change in our perspective of things. While each of us are personally responsible and should be good stewards of the vision, call and work God has given to us, we must understand that ultimately, it is not about our ministry, our local church, or our calling. It is about the Kingdom of God.

We must operate out of a Kingdom mindset, where the Kingdom of God supersedes our individual vision, calling, ministry, and local church. This appears foolish, especially when other ministers may not subscribe to similar thinking and continue pursuing the growth of their own agendas without paying attention to the best interests of Kingdom advancement. However, this is another area, where Matthew 6:33 must be put to practice: "*But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you*."

Putting the advancement and growth of the Kingdom of God ahead of our personal advancement is one of the ways we learn to die to self. This is not easy, but it is the right thing to do. God will honor such sacrifices.

We Must Learn To Connect And Work With Each Other

We Are Designed for Partnership

1 Corinthians 12:18
But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased.

The Body of Christ has been designed for people to work in partnership.

Ephesians 4:16
From whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

Every joint must supply its share.

Partnership is complementing each other not competing with each other. We have been designed to complement each other.

We are all needed and gifted for the forthcoming moves of God. We must all come into our rightful place in the family of God. God is raising the five-fold ministry to strengthen the Church, and to properly position the saints in their gift and call, whether it is in the local church or the extended Body of Christ, worldwide. As each one is positioned, equipped, and

released into their call, we will have a Body functioning perfectly and effectively.

John 4:36-38
36 And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.
37 For in this the saying is true: 'One sows and another reaps.'
38 I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors.

1 Corinthians 3:5-8
5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one?
6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.
7 So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.
8 Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor.

This is the way God works. God often, uses one man to sow, another man to water and yet another man to reap. Very often, we fail to understand this and fall into doing things the wrong way in Kingdom building. We have the mindset that "*I planted, I will water and I will reap the harvest*." So, we prevent anyone else from stepping into "our field" and guard our territory.

It is the Lord who sends people to enter into our labors (John 4:38). However, because we are not Kingdom minded, when the Lord sends people to enter into our labors, to either water or help reap the harvest, we chase them away. And then we wonder why the seeds we have sown are not springing up. We wonder why we are not being able to harvest. One of the reasons could be that we are chasing away those whom the Lord is sending to water what we have sown, or we are chasing away the harvesters whom the Lord is sending to help us reap the harvest.

When we receive those whom the Lord has sent, we receive Him. "*Most assuredly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me*" (John 13:20). Some of us may be guilty of turning the Lord away from our work, because He came in the form of another brother or sister who sought to work alongside us.

Of course, we must not be naive and permit just anyone to enter the work entrusted to us. We must cautiously guard against brethren who sow discord and those who are interested in pursuing their own selfish interests. We must guard against false apostles and ministers of satan who pretend to be ministers of Christ.

God desires to give increase, but He will do it His way, not our way. In God's Kingdom, increase comes through partnership, because God has designed it that way.

Similarly, God may send us to enter into other people's labors. We must be careful how we enter into other people's labors. We must always honor and acknowledge those who have gone before us. We must remember that we cannot water unless someone else has sown in tears. We must remember that we cannot reap unless others have ploughed the ground, sown the seed and watered the seed through their sacrifice, prayers, and labor. God intends that those who sow and those who reap should rejoice together (John 4:36). So, celebrate the harvest with those who have sown and watered.

In God's Kingdom he who plants, he who waters and he who reaps are all one (1 Corinthians 3:8). No one is superior, better, or more important in God's Kingdom. God views us all as one, equal.

An important aspect in Kingdom partnership is that we must know where God wants us to be positioned at any given season, what role He wants us to play and what He wants us to do, as God has allotted for that season (1 Corinthians 3:5).

1 Corinthians 10:13
We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but within the limits of the sphere which God appointed us—a sphere which especially includes you.

We must also understand the boundaries and the sphere of influence He has assigned to us.

God has determined each one's "sphere of influence." We must discern the sphere of influence that God has appointed for us and stay within it. God extends our sphere of influence as He sees fit. As God does so, we must move with Him to touch the lives of people He desires for us to minister to.

Paul's Co-workers

Romans 16:7
Greet Andronicus and Junia, my countrymen and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

Romans 16:21
Timothy, my fellow worker, and Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, my countrymen, greet you.

2 Corinthians 8:23
If anyone inquires about Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker concerning you. Or if our brethren are inquired about, they are messengers of the churches, the glory of Christ.

Philippians 4:3
And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life.

Colossians 1:7
As you also learned from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on your

behalf.

Colossians 4:7,10-11
7 Tychicus, a beloved brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord, will tell you all the news about me.
10 Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, with Mark the cousin of Barnabas (about whom you received instructions: if he comes to you, welcome him),
11 and Jesus who is called Justus. These are my only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are of the circumcision; they have proved to be a comfort to me.

1 Thessalonians 3:2
And sent Timothy, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith.

Philemon 1:1-2,23-24
1 Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, to Philemon our beloved friend and fellow laborer,
2 to the beloved Apphia, Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house:
23 Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you,
24 as do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow laborers.

In the book of Acts and in several places in his epistles, Paul himself names and acknowledges many people as his co-workers. He uses terms such as "fellow prisoners, workfellow, partner and fellow helper, yoke fellow, fellow laborers, fellow servant" (KJV) to refer to these people.

Barnabas, Silas, Luke (Lucas), Andronicus, Junia, Timothy (Timotheus), Lucius, Jason, Sosipater, Titus, Clement, Epaphras, Tychicus, Aristarchus, Marcus, Justus, Philemon, Apphia, Archippus, Demas, certain *"other brethren" "those women who labored with me in the gospel," "other fellow laborers whose names are in the Book of life."*

This is an example we must emulate. We must recognize and honor those who serve alongside us and those who we know have labored ahead of us. We must give honor to whom honor is due.

Allow God To Bring About Divine Connections

1 Chronicles 12:16-18,22,38
16 Then some of the sons of Benjamin and Judah came to David at the stronghold.
17 And David went out to meet them, and answered and said to them, "If you have come peaceably to me to help me, my heart will be united with you; but if to betray me to my enemies, since there is no wrong in my hands, may the God of our fathers look and bring judgment."
18 Then the Spirit came upon Amasai, chief of the captains, and he said: "We are yours, O David; We are on your side, O son of Jesse! Peace, peace to you, And peace to your helpers! For your God helps you." So David received them, and made them captains of the troop.
22 For at that time they came to David day by day to help him, until it was a great army, like the army of God.
38 All these men of war, who could keep ranks, came to Hebron with a loyal heart, to make David king over

all Israel; and all the rest of Israel were of one mind to make David king.

Although this is an Old Testament passage there is something very interesting that we can learn about the working of God's Spirit.

Once David stepped into his calling to be king over all Israel, we see the Spirit of God moving on several people and causing them to come to David and serve under his leadership. Initially when these men of war started coming to David, he was apprehensive. But he eventually welcomed them and others. Many strong leaders and men of war came to David, until he had a great army under him.

We must recognize those whom the Lord in connecting to our lives and embrace such divine connections. We must honor such relationships, treat these carefully, walk wisely, and work together under the Holy Spirit for the Kingdom of God.

Of course, we must avoid wrong connections. We must also avoid the temptation to force connections out of fleshly interests.

We Are Not To Judge Others

Matthew 20:1–16
1 For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard.
2 Now when he had agreed with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard.
3 And he went out about the third hour and saw others standing idle in the marketplace,
4 and said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you.' So they went.
5 Again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did likewise.
6 And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing idle, and said to them, 'Why have you been standing here idle all day?'
7 They said to him, 'Because no one hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right you will receive.'
8 "So when evening had come, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, 'Call the laborers and give them their wages, beginning with the last to the first.'
9 And when those came who were hired about the eleventh hour, they each received a denarius.
10 But when the first came, they supposed that they would receive more; and they likewise received each a denarius.
11 And when they had received it, they complained against the landowner,
12 saying, 'These last men have worked only one hour, and you made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the heat of the day.'
13 But he answered one of them and said, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius?
14 Take what is yours and go your way. I wish to give to this last man the same as to you.
15 Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Or is your eye evil because I am good?'
16 So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen.

In the work of God's Kingdom, it is God who determines whom He raises up, how He anoints them, and the extent of the work He wants them to do.

In the Kingdom of God, those who come at a later stage, have the benefit of building upon the grace, revelation, and anointing of previous generations and hence can experience quicker and greater harvest. We must celebrate this and rejoice in what the Lord does through their lives.

Romans 14:4
Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.

1 Corinthians 4: 5
Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.

Avoid comparing yourself with other ministers.

Avoid judging other ministers, trying to determine their reward.

Each One Is Gifted Differently

1 Corinthians 12:5–7
5 There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord.
6 And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.
7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all.

Understand that each one is gifted differently. Respect the way God works through each one.

Do not raise up walls of division because of such differences.

Do Not Major On The Minors

Romans 14:1–5
1 Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things.
2 For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables. Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him.
3 Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to
4 stand, for God is able to make him stand.
5 One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind.

There are some things that are not worth debating about. In such matters each one is free to hold on to their own personal convictions. We must not allow such insignificant issues to

divide us.

The Value Of Partnership In The Kingdom

Partnership Is Unity in Practice

Psalm 133:1–3
1 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!
2 It is like the precious oil upon the head, running down on the beard, the beard of Aaron, running down on the edge of his garments.
3 It is like the dew of Hermon, descending upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing—Life forevermore.

It is wonderful to talk about unity theologically or as a concept. However, it is when we partner together and work together that we practice unity. Unity is the place of anointing and blessing. Partnership, working together for the kingdom, is a practical way to live out our unity.

Partnership Brings Strength

Ecclesiastes 4:12
Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

A kingdom that is divided will not stand. On the other hand, a kingdom that is united has its strength multiplied several times over. Two are better than one. Three of us increase our strength. All of us united make us invincible before the enemy.

Partnership Produces Kingdom Advancement

God's Kingdom remains stagnant, weak, ineffective and without influence in many areas because we are divided. But the moment we come together with Kingdom mindset and for the advancement of the Kingdom of God, this will change. A whole lot more than what is currently being accomplished can be achieved through Kingdom partnership.

Things That Hinder Partnership In The Kingdom

Here are a few things that hinder the developing of Kingdom partnerships.

"Me and Mine" Mentality

When we are not looking at the "big picture" of God's Kingdom, and focus on our own interests, we tend to shy away from engaging in Kingdom partnerships.

"What Is in it for Me?" Mentality

While we must be good stewards of the work God has assigned to us, we must not approach every partnership engagement with a "what's in it for me?" attitude. Sometimes, we may not stand to gain anything directly, but the Kingdom of God stands to gain, and this is more important.

Comparing and Competing

If our motivation is one of competition, of outdoing other ministers, then this becomes a hindrance to genuine Kingdom partnerships.

Promoting Discord—Intentionally or Unintentionally

Sometimes we as ministers are not careful, and through our speech and actions we promote discord in the Body of Christ. We slander, backbite, belittle other ministers. This causes division which then weakens the Kingdom and hinders partnerships. We forget that God detests those who sow discord among brethren.

Proverbs 6:16–19
16 These six things the LORD hates, yes, seven are an abomination to Him:
17 A proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood,
18 a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that are swift in running to evil,
19 A false witness who speaks lies, and one who sows discord among brethren.

Pretense Partnerships

Sometimes we have all the right language and verbally promise to work together, but when it comes down to actual working out of partnership, we do not do anything. This is only a pretense with no actual practice. So long as we are satisfied with mere talk with no action, we are hindering real Kingdom partnership and will not see progress.

Reflection

1. Do you really have a Kingdom mindset? Are you able to put the advancement of the Kingdom of God ahead of personal ministry growth?
2. What are some of the things that hold you back from co-laboring or partnering with other ministers and ministries? How can you overcome these?

They'll Know We Are Christians

Written by: Peter Scholtes

We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord,
We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord,
And we pray that all unity may one day be restored.

Refrain
And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love,
Yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.

We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand,
We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand,
And together we'll spread the news that God is in our land.

We will work with each other, we will work side by side,
We will work with each other, we will work side by side,
And we'll guard each one's dignity and save each one's pride.

All praise to the Father, from whom all things come,
And all praise to Christ Jesus, his only Son,
And all praise to the Spirit, who makes us one.

8. THE CITYWIDE CHURCH ESTABLISHING GOD'S KINGDOM

Matthew 6:9-10
9 In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.
10 Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.

Cities are conglomerations of large numbers of people. Reaching people in cities and seeing city transformation for the Kingdom of God then become the responsibility of the citywide church. We use the term citywide church to refer to the Body of Christ in the city, comprising believers in different local churches spread across the city.

Christian ministers, Christian leaders, and believers in the city, need to have a vision and understanding of the Kingdom of God in the city and see beyond their own local church and Christian organization.

The Call For Unity: One Body—Many Congregations

Our Lord Jesus prayed: "*that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me*" (John 17:21).

The Church of the Lord Jesus Christ in the city, made up of all people who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and have embraced Him as their only Savior and Lord—is one Body. We are one Body, one citywide church, although we are part of different local congregations, having our own forms, expressions, and styles of worship. It is important for us to "be one"—in the unity and fellowship of the Spirit, in our working for Kingdom expansion in our city, and in the expression of our love, solidarity, and support of each other. Then the people in our city will turn to see who Jesus really is and believe in Him even as we have done.

The citywide church must develop into an extended community of believers demonstrating in practical ways our oneness in Christ through genuine unity, love, fellowship, and partnership, so "that the world may believe."

The citywide church must engage meaningfully in partnership to disciple the whole city with the Gospel of Jesus Christ leading to city transformation in all realms (spiritual, social, marketplace, physical, etc.).

Our Common Foundations:

- We are one Body, one citywide church, although part of different local congregations.
- We are under submission to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and seek first His Kingdom and His will to be done in our city.
- We value, respect, support, and partner with one another to further His Kingdom in our city.

Starting With The Leadership

For the citywide church to come together in unity and fellowship, we must get the Christian leadership in the city together. What usually happens is that because Christian leaders in a city are disconnected from each other, the rest of the Body is also disconnected. It is very possible that there may be many good leaders of local churches and Christian organizations (para-church organizations, Christian NGO's) in a city, but they may never really meet each other or interact with each other for extended periods of time. Other than knowing each other's names and organization names, there may not be any kind of relationship between these leaders.

Hence, first and foremost for the citywide church to come together we need to help build relationship of trust, respect, fellowship and sharing among Christian leaders in a city.

Monthly Round Table Discussions

One way to do this is by having regular monthly meetings for pastors, Christian leaders, and Christian leaders in the marketplace to meet, fellowship, interact, pray, learn, and enrich each other. These meetings should not become "conference style" meetings where people come, listen to a message, and fellowship a little and then go away. Something more effective that provides a platform for everyone to share, discuss and interact would be better. Round table discussions, where leaders sit in small groups to discuss a topic or issue, and then each group provides a summary to everyone else, is a great learning and mutually enriching meeting. Adequate time must be maintained for worship and praying together and for each other. God works in such an environment and changes hearts and minds.

Partnership For City Transformation

We must work together to facilitate partnership, collaboration, and cooperation between churches and Christian ministries to work together toward city transformation in all spheres: spiritual, social, marketplace, and physical transformation.

Our partnership should go beyond occasional events and gatherings and must translate into ongoing partnership and collaboration across churches and Christian ministries.

As Christian leaders who take on a Kingdom mindset, there are several things we can do collaboratively:

A. Encourage partnership in things that are already being done in the city.
B. Start and oversees new initiatives that are on purpose done by partnership of many churches and Christian organizations.

Encourage Partnership in Things that Are Already Being Done in the City

i. Churches that already have ongoing programs that are similar (e.g., feeding the poor, slum outreach, equipping marketplace believers) can cross-pollinate and run the same programs together so that it becomes stronger, more effective, etc. This must be done with the proper involvement of pastors and with the understanding that believers will not be made to change local church affiliations in the process.
ii. Similarly, churches that have programs similar to what is being done by Christian organizations (para-church organizations, Christian NGO's) can begin to work together and run the program as a combined effort. Example, if there are five churches having special ministry for marriages, and there are three Christian ministries doing the same, all of them can work together to develop a ministry for marriages to serve their own churches and the Body of Christ in the city.
iii. Encourage "richer" churches to give financially to "poorer" churches for purchase of equipment, etc.
iv. Encourage mature churches to impart and equip younger churches—spiritually, organizationally, etc.

Challenges

i. Developing a Kingdom mindset among pastors and believers—where we can all work together without fear of losing congregation members, and with trust that fellow pastors will not draw people away in the process. We need to help develop Kingdom mindset and loyalty among leaders and believers.
ii. Ensure that the vision and mission of the local churches and non-church Christian organizations are fulfilled, when working in partnership with each other. There must be an inclusive strategy so that both local churches, Christian ministries and the larger citywide church are benefitted when churches and ministries work together.

Start and Oversee New Initiatives that Are Done on Purpose by Partnership of Many Churches and Christian Ministries

i. Facilitate new ministry initiatives—that happen through partnership of churches and Christian organizations—who have a clear understanding of how to work together, so as to maximize impact on the city. Example: start a new initiative to rescue street children, provide them a home to live in and take care of them, educate them, and give them a good future. Several churches and Christian ministries can collaborate and make this a massive effort that will truly impact the city.

Challenges

i. Such a collaborative effort needs to be organizationally strong to make this happen. This will require some amount of financial investment toward administrative work.

Citywide Unity Gatherings

Psalm 50:5
Gather My saints together to Me, those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.

These "Unity Gatherings" could be regularly scheduled prayer services, worship services or even outreach events, where churches and Christian organizations across the city participate. Financial and organizational responsibilities will be shared across all participating churches and Christian organizations.

Challenges

i. We need to remove fear from the minds of pastors that they will lose their congregation to other churches. We must assure them that in the Unity Gatherings, no man or local church is being promoted. We are coming together to exalt Jesus Christ alone.
ii. We need to remove fear from the minds of pastors that their congregation's doctrine will be "corrupted." We need to be sensitive to each church background. We are coming together to the "unity of the faith" not "unity of doctrine." We are coming together around our "knowledge of the Son of God" whom we all worship.

Recommendations

- ✓ Celebrating the Lord's Table at the unity gatherings would be a powerful statement of our being one Body in Christ.
- ✓ The format and style of worship must be inclusive to accommodate both contemporary songs and singing of hymns.

- ✓ We must maintain an approach where there will be no special dignitaries, no guests of honor, no special mention of any one pastor or bishop, etc. All pastors, Christian leaders will be on the same platform as believers. Our focus must be on the Lord Jesus who will alone be the Chief One at each unity gathering.

The Citywide Church At Work In The City

Believers must be inspired with a vision of strengthening unity, cooperation and fellowship across churches and ministries—and be motivated to do so in practical ways by working together to reach the city for Jesus. It takes a citywide church to win a citywide battle. To see our city transformed by the power of the Gospel, believers across churches and denominations must join hearts and hands to work together to see: (a) Spiritual Transformation (b) Social Transformation (c) Marketplace Transformation and (d) Physical Transformation in our city. Here are some areas for cooperation:

Spiritual Transformation

- Believers across churches join in small group prayer for the citywide church and the city.
- Local churches and ministries working with and complementing each other in ministering to the city through combined evangelism and discipleship efforts.
- Pastors uniting in prayer, vigilance, and ministry efforts to shepherd the city together.

Social Transformation

- Bring Kingdom response to social evils—suicide, drug use, poverty, oppression, corruption, etc.
- Rather than working in isolation, churches and ministries join hands, pooling resources to engage in community-related social action to feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, rescue the oppressed, care for widows, orphans, and less privileged.

Marketplace Transformation

- Believers from all churches who meet in the marketplace, work together to bring about cultural transformation in all spheres of society (Arts & Entertainment, Media, Business, Education, Government, Family, Religion) by living honest, pure, godly lives.
- Believers from all churches engaging the marketplace by demonstrating the Kingdom through excellence, integrity and the supernatural in the marketplace.

Physical Transformation

Believers across churches joining hands and working with civic authorities in one or

more of the following:

- Provide better homes for slum dwellers and work toward slum removal.
- Provide input for improvement of health and hygiene in our city.
- Provide input for improvement of water, transportation, and infrastructure.
- Take action to create more jobs and contribute to the economic growth of the city.

A United Response To Persecution

An added benefit of strengthening unity in the citywide church is the mutual strength and support that the Body of Christ can provide to each other, during times of persecution. In fact, in regions or times where persecution is expected, it is imperative for Christian leaders, local churches and Christian organizations to stand together united.

Covenant Of Unity And Loyalty

We will worship and seek God together for His heart for our city. We will work together to see His Kingdom come and His will be done so that our city may know and believe that Jesus Christ is Lord. In the presence of God and these witnesses, we make this solemn covenant.

Reflection

1. What can you do to initiate or participate in the task of developing unity in the citywide church in your city or region?
2. Other than what has been presented in this chapter, are there other ways the citywide church can (A) develop unity and fellowship and (B) work together to establishing God's Kingdom in the city (or region)?

For further study on the citywide church working together, please use the free APC book: "Divine Order in the Citywide Church."

The Church's One Foundation

Written By: Samuel J. Stone, Lyra Fidelium

The Church's one foundation
Is Jesus Christ her Lord,
She is His new creation
By water and the Word.
From heaven He came and sought her
To be His holy bride;
With His own blood He bought her
And for her life He died.

She is from every nation,
Yet one o'er all the earth;
Her charter of salvation,
One Lord, one faith, one birth;
One holy Name she blesses,
Partakes one holy food,
And to one hope she presses,
With every grace endued.

The Church shall never perish!
Her dear Lord to defend,
To guide, sustain, and cherish,
Is with her to the end:

Though there be those who hate her,
And false sons in her pale,
Against both foe and traitor
She ever shall prevail.

Though with a scornful wonder
Men see her sore oppressed,
By schisms rent asunder,
By heresies distressed:

Yet saints their watch are keeping,
Their cry goes up, "How long?"
And soon the night of weeping
Shall be the morn of song!

'Mid toil and tribulation,
And tumult of her war,
She waits the consummation
Of peace forevermore;
Till, with the vision glorious,
Her longing eyes are blest,
And the great Church victorious
Shall be the Church at rest.

Yet she on earth hath union
With God the Three in One,
And mystic sweet communion
With those whose rest is won,
With all her sons and daughters
Who, by the Master's hand
Led through the deathly waters,
Repose in Eden land.

O happy ones and holy!
Lord, give us grace that we
Like them, the meek and lowly,
On high may dwell with Thee:
There, past the border mountains,
Where in sweet vales the Bride
With Thee by living fountains
Forever shall abide!

9. Brothers And Fathers (Sisters And Mothers)

1 John 2:9-11
9 He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now.
10 He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him.
11 But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

God never intended for any of us to travel through life's journey alone. He gave us each other. We are part of His Body. While life may have its seasons of loneliness or even intentional aloneness, we still need brothers by our side.

As ministers of God, do we really know what it means to be a brother? And where are the fathers? Where are those godly men, who will watch over those younger, with a genuine heart of a father?

Many of us are busy being preachers and ministers and forget the need to be true Christian brothers and fathers to each other in the Kingdom of God. We use the term "brothers" and "fathers" in an inclusive manner, and refer to sisters and mothers in the Kingdom.

Brother, Fellow Laborer, And Minister Of God

1 Thessalonians 3:2
and sent Timothy, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith,

Timothy was someone whom the Apostle Paul "fathered" in the faith. Once Timothy had grown and matured as a man of God, the Apostle Paul refers to him as a brother, a minister of God and a fellow laborer. In Paul's epistles he refers to several other ministers of God as brothers.

In Christian ministry today, especially among leaders, this sense of being a brother to a fellow laborer, to another minister of God is often missing. This is because often in our interactions we are businesslike and transactional rather than being relational. We share information and ideas but not our hearts. Our friendships are often superficial at a surface-level only. We don't share our weaknesses and areas of need lest the other minister friend gossips about it and spreads the news. We don't make ourselves vulnerable and hence we are unable to really support and strengthen each other.

In Kingdom building, we need to move from being ministers of God and fellow laborers to being brothers in the Kingdom.

Born For Adversity

Proverbs 17:17
A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.

How often as leaders we struggle all alone. We serve hundreds and even thousands of people, but we find ourselves all alone in our times of pain. This is because as leaders we do not have close friends, brothers in the Kingdom who will stand with us during times of adversity. In our busyness of doing ministry, we have failed to build genuine friendships with other ministers of God.

Similarly, we need to learn to be a brother to other ministers of God. Someone who is genuine in our friendship, who seeks the well-being of the other, who is not afraid to speak the truth in love and correct when things are not right. A brother who can be trusted with matters of the heart knowing that there will be no betrayal of what is shared in confidence.

A Personal Challenge

To be a brother to another minister of God, I need to spend time with him to really get to know him. I need to spend time with him and his family and watch how he treats his wife and children. I need to spend time at his church or ministry office, with his staff and see how he works with his staff. I need to invite him to my home and my church or office. We must spend time where we worship, pray, and seek God together. I need to lay hands on him and pray for him. I need to have him lay hands on me and pray for me. I need to stand by him in times of difficulty and journey with him through it. I need to celebrate his success and moments of victory with him. I need to be available for him when he needs counsel or advice. Similarly, I need to be able to reach out to him for his counsel. I need to receive from his gift, anointing, and ministry. Similarly, he must receive through the gift, anointing, and ministry that God has placed in me. I must honor him for who he is in God, and similarly he honors me for who I am in God. We must partner with each other as friends. I must sacrifice and give for his personal welfare and his family. When people hate him, criticize him, I must stand in defense, and still be his friend. We need to be such friends, such brothers in the Kingdom.

When A Brother Stumbles

Galatians 6:1
Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of

gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.

Matthew 7:3-5
3 And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye?
4 Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye?
5 Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

Often when a fellow minister of God stumbles, sins, makes a mistake, other leaders are the first to criticize, point accusations, and publicize the news. We are quick to point out the speck in our brother while ignoring the plank in ourselves.

Would it not be so much better, if we first made a genuine attempt to bring restoration with meekness and gentleness, knowing that we ourselves could stumble and fall in the same areas. This is what a true brother would do.

Light And Hate Don't Mix

1 John 2:9-11
9 He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now.
10 He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him.
11 But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

As ministers of God, we are very spiritual people. We devote a lot of time for prayer, worship, fasting, and meditation in God's Word. However, after having done all these wonderful spiritual disciplines, we still spout out hate, revenge, ill-feeling, and slander about other ministers of God.

The Bible tells us that if we claim to walk in the light, but hate our brother, we are in darkness. We are blinded and do not even know that we are in darkness. This is a dangerous place to be in because we will not know where we are going.

This simply means that carrying hate in our hearts is not an option. Any hurt, any form of bitterness, jealousy, or unforgiveness toward another minister of God must be removed quickly. We cannot carry hate in our hearts and claim to be walking in the light.

Putting The Past Behind Us

Matthew 18:15
Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.

Matthew 18:35
So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.

It is possible that there may have been misunderstandings in the past where relationships may have broken down between ministers of God. But we must work toward gaining our brother back and restoring friendships. We must leave the past behind, receive and release forgiveness, heal the wounds and move ahead as brothers in the Kingdom of God. If we ask God for His forgiveness for our mistakes but are unwilling to release forgiveness to a brother who has wronged us, we are positioning ourselves for God's strong disciplinary dealings.

May Fathers And Mothers Arise In The Kingdom

In addition to being brothers to other ministers of God, what the Kingdom of God desperately needs is men and women who will be fathers and mothers to the next generation. We need to go beyond being great preachers, great ministers of God, and become true Kingdom builders. A Kingdom builder will seek to establish continuity in the work of God's Kingdom. A Kingdom builder will seek to be a father to the next generation to generously pass on and impart everything he has received.

This is what we will discuss in the next and final chapter.

Reflection

1. Am I a genuine brother to other ministers of God known to me? Can I identify one, two, or more fellow laborers with whom I would seek to build genuine friendship, and be a genuine brother in the Kingdom?

Let There Be Love Shared Among Us

Written by: Dave Bilbrough

Let there be love shared among us
Let there be love in our eyes
May now Your love sweep this nation.
Cause us oh Lord to arise
Give us a fresh understanding
Of brotherly love that is real,
Let there be love shared among us,
Let there be love

10. Raising The Next Generation For Kingdom Service

Philippians 2:19-22
19 But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state.
20 For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state.
21 For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus.
22 But you know his proven character, that as a son with his father he served with me in the gospel.
God has given us the ability to procreate—both in the natural and in the spiritual.

1 Corinthians 4:14-15
14 I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn you.
15 For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

However, when we reproduce, we do not produce "Xerox copies" or exact replicas. Those we give birth to have their own individuality and identity.

Your success in ministry is incomplete if you do not raise successors.

The day you begin (any ministry) is the day you should start planning your departure.

Isaiah 59:21
As for Me," says the LORD, "this is My covenant with them: My Spirit who is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your descendants, nor from the mouth of your descendants' descendants," says the LORD, "from this time and forevermore.

God desires that the anointing and revelation given to one generation must be passed on to the next. He will add on a fresh anointing and fresh revelation to that, to empower the next generation to do what they must do in their time.

1 Corinthians 4:17
For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church.

- The foundation that is being laid in the present will lie in ruins, if there are no "Timothys" to continue the work.
- The "Timothys" of today, will become the "Pauls" of tomorrow.
- We need to raise the next generation otherwise there will be no one to continue the work after the present generation passes away.

- Very often, in the church, the present generation wants all the attention, and the next generation is neglected.
- Each generation must pass on to the next, the things it has received.
- The next generation should receive everything that has been given to the present generation.
- The high point of one generation should become the starting point of the next generation.

How To Raise Up "Timothys": Lessons From The "Paul-Timothy" Relationship

The Apostle Paul considered Timothy as a beloved son in the faith (2 Timothy 1:2). He nurtured Timothy into a minister of God and a fellow laborer in the Kingdom, so that Timothy could do the work of the Kingdom, even as Paul did. We trace and highlight key points in this process through which Paul raised Timothy up to be a Kingdom builder.

Recognize a Divine Connection

Acts 16:1–3
1 Then he came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but his father was Greek.
2 He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium.
3 Paul wanted to have him go on with him. And he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in that region, for they all knew that his father was Greek.

While there may have been several young men at Derbe and Lystra, Paul sensed a special connection with a young man named Timothy. Timothy had a good report among the people of God in his community. Paul made arrangements for Timothy to be part of his ministry. Paul also circumcised Timothy, as a way for Timothy to be able to associate and work with the Jews, when necessary.

Be sensitive to the "divine connections" God sets up in your life. God may send "Timothys" into your life or send you as a "Paul" into other peoples' lives.

Make sure that you begin by doing things that will help your Timothy's future.

Get your Timothy to come alongside you and work with you. Timothy had the privilege of traveling along with Paul in the ministry.

Acts 17:14-15
14 Then immediately the brethren sent Paul away, to go to the sea; but both Silas and Timothy remained there.
15 So those who conducted Paul brought him to Athens; and receiving a command for Silas and Timothy

to come to him with all speed, they departed.

Acts 18:5
When Silas and Timothy had come from Macedonia, Paul was compelled by the Spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ.

Acts 20:1–4
1 After the uproar had ceased, Paul called the disciples to himself, embraced them, and departed to go to Macedonia.
2 Now when he had gone over that region and encouraged them with many words, he came to Greece
3 and stayed three months. And when the Jews plotted against him as he was about to sail to Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia.
4 And Sopater of Berea accompanied him to Asia—also Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia.

Philippians 2:22
But you know his proven character, that as a son with his father he served with me in the gospel.

1 Timothy 2:2
And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

- Select your "Timothy" carefully.
- Faithfulness is more important than ability.
- The condition of the heart is more important than the gifts.

Develop a Nurturing Relationship

1 Timothy 1:2
To Timothy, a true son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

1 Timothy 1:2
To Timothy, a beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 Corinthians 4:17
For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church.

There was a special bond—a special relationship between Paul and Timothy. Paul considered Timothy as his spiritual son and Timothy looked up to Paul as his spiritual father.

Establish Closeness and Transparency

2 Timothy 3:10-11
10 But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance,
11 persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me.

There was a closeness and transparency on the part of Apostle Paul that allowed Timothy to see and know Paul for who he really was. Timothy responded by following or patterning himself after what he saw in Paul.

Communicate Specific Instructions

1 Timothy 1:18
This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare.

1 Timothy 6:20
O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge.

Paul instructed Timothy, teaching him what to do, what not to do, what pitfalls to avoid and so on (1 and 2 Timothy).

Encourage, Exhort, Correct

Paul gave Timothy encouragement.

1 Timothy 6:12
Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

One of the toughest things in ministry is to administer correction. But you must learn to do it in a loving, positive, and uplifting way. If you do not correct your Timothy, then the very thing that you allow will become a “cancer” that will eat into his life and destroy him. Correction is like doing “spiritual surgery”—it hurts, but it has a positive result.

Clarify the Costs

There was communication of genuine costs, the price that must be paid to serve God. Paul did not “smooth talk” Timothy. He laid things out as they were. He invited Timothy to share in his sufferings.

1 Timothy 1:8
Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God.

2 Timothy 2:3–5
3 You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.
4 No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.
5 And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.

Place Honor, Build Up, Treat with Respect

1 Timothy 6:11
But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.

1 Corinthians 1:1
Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints who are in all Achaia.

Philemon 1:1
Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, to Philemon our beloved friend and fellow laborer.

Romans 16:21
Timothy, my fellow worker, and Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, my countrymen, greet you.

Paul communicated with a high sense of regard for Timothy. He called Timothy "a man of God," "a brother," "a fellow worker." He recognized Timothy's true worth, his calling, gifting, and anointing.

How you treat your "Timothy," will determine if you will raise up a servant or a son. If you treat him as a servant, you will raise up a servant. If you treat him as a son, you will raise up a son.

We must learn to be true fathers and mothers in the house of God, rather than being lords and bosses over God's people. Fathers and mothers have sons and daughters. Lords and bosses have servants. Who we are, will greatly determine the kind of people we nurture in the house of God.

A servant does work in the house for a reward, while a son does work in the house because he belongs.

A servant's commitment can change and so a servant can leave one house to work in another house. A son is firm in his commitment. He knows where he belongs. Even if a son moves on to have his own house, he will always remember his father.

A servant receives a reward for their work, but a son receives an inheritance because he belongs.

Delegate and Empower

Paul sent Timothy on specific missions. Paul had enough trust and confidence in Timothy to give him these responsibilities.

1 Corinthians 4:17
For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church.

Philippians 2:19
But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state.

1 Thessalonians 3:1-2
1 Therefore, when we could no longer endure it, we thought it good to be left in Athens alone,
2 and sent Timothy, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith.

Delegation of responsibility helps people grow and mature. Permit people to make mistakes and treat them graciously when they do. Use mistakes as opportunities to learn and grow.

Recommend Positively

1 Corinthians 16:10
And if Timothy comes, see that he may be with you without fear; for he does the work of the Lord, as I also do.

Philippians 2:19–23
19 But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state.
20 For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state.
21 For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus.
22 But you know his proven character, that as a son with his father he served with me in the gospel.
23 Therefore I hope to send him at once, as soon as I see how it goes with me.

Paul recommended him enthusiastically and positively when he sent him out. Paul recommended Timothy as a coworker and coequal in the ministry.

Release Into God's Calling

Paul finally left Timothy to take care of the church at Ephesus.

1 Timothy 1:3
As I urged you when I went into Macedonia—remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine.

Through practical training, Timothy was groomed into a man of God.

It is an honor to see a "Timothy" become a peer. It is a greater honor when a "Timothy" surpasses us. We have accomplished our mission. We have been a good spiritual father.

Problems arise when the son fails to grow up or when the father desires the son to always remain a "son," instead of becoming a "joint-heir."

When You Are Old And Gray-Headed

Psalm 71:17-18
17 O God, You have taught me from my youth; and to this day I declare Your wondrous works.
18 Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, do not forsake me, until I declare Your strength to this generation, Your power to everyone who is to come.

Isaiah 46:4
Even to your old age, I am He, and even to gray hairs I will carry you! I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.

Keep demonstrating God's strength. God's anointing does not diminish with age!

Share the Wisdom of God

One of the important things we can do, as we mature in the Kingdom is to pass on the wisdom we have received through our walk with God.

Keep Your Anointing Fresh. "Re-fire," Do Not Retire!

Psalm 92:10
But my horn You have exalted like a wild ox; I have been anointed with fresh oil.

Keep Bearing Fruit

Psalm 92:14
They shall still bear fruit in old age; they shall be fresh and flourishing.

Depart With Grace

1 Chronicles 29:28
So he died in a good old age, full of days and riches and honor; and Solomon his son reigned in his place.

Reflection

1. What has your experience been in nurturing younger ministers? What have been the successes and the challenges?
2. How can you become a better spiritual father to younger ministers and genuinely help nurture them?

Onward, Christian Soldiers

Written by: Sabine Baring-Gould

Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war,
with the cross of Jesus going on before.

Christ, the royal Master, leads against the foe;
forward into battle see his banners go!

Refrain
Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war,
with the cross of Jesus going on before.

At the sign of triumph Satan's host doth flee;
on then, Christian soldiers, on to victory!
Hell's foundations quiver at the shout of praise;
brothers, lift your voices, loud your anthems raise. (Refrain)

Like a mighty army moves the church of God;
brothers, we are treading where the saints have trod.
We are not divided, all one body we,
one in hope and doctrine, one in charity. (Refrain)

Crowns and thrones may perish, kingdoms rise and wane,
but the church of Jesus constant will remain.
Gates of hell can never 'gainst that church prevail;
we have Christ's own promise, and that cannot fail. (Refrain)

Onward then, ye people, join our happy throng,
blend with ours your voices in the triumph song.
Glory, laud, and honor unto Christ the King,
this through countless ages men and angels sing. (Refrain)

Partner With All Peoples Church

All Peoples Church ministers beyond its own borders as a local church by reaching out all across India, especially North India, with a special focus on (A) Strengthening Leaders, (B) Equipping young people for ministry and (C) Building up the Body of Christ. Several training seminars for young people, and Christian Leaders conferences are held throughout the year. In addition, several thousands of copies of books are distributed free of cost in English and other Indian languages with the purpose of equipping believers in the Word and in the Spirit.

We invite you to partner with us financially by sending either a one-time gift or a monthly financial gift. Any amount that you can send to help us in this work across our nation will be greatly appreciated.

You can send your gift by cheque / bank draft payable to "All Peoples Church" to our office address. Else you can remit your contribution directly by bank transfer using our bank account details.

Account Name: All Peoples Church
Account Number: 0057213809
IFSC Code: CITI0000004
Bank: Citibank N.A., No. 5, M.G. Road, Bengaluru, Karnataka 560001

Kindly note: All Peoples Church can only accept bank contributions from an India based bank account. When making your contribution, if desired, you can indicate the specific APC ministry area where you would like your contribution to be used. For additional details please visit ***apcwo.org/give***

Also, please remember to pray for us and our ministry whenever you can.

Thank You and God Bless!

Free Publications

A Church in Revival*
A Real Place Called Heaven
A Time for Every Purpose
Ancient Landmarks*
Baptism in the Holy Spirit
Being Spiritually Minded and Earthly Wise
Biblical Attitude Towards Work
Breaking Personal and Generational Bondages
Change*
Code of Honor
Divine Favor*
Divine Order in the Citywide Church
Don't Compromise Your Calling*
Don't Lose Hope
Equipping the Saints
Foundations (Track 1)
Fulfilling God's Purpose for Your Life
Gifts of the Holy Spirit
Giving Birth to the Purposes of God*
God Is a Good God
God's Word—The Miracle Seed
How to Help Your Pastor
Integrity
Kingdom Builders
Laying the Axe to the Root
Living Life Without Strife*
Marriage and Family
Ministering Healing and Deliverance
Offenses—Don't Take Them
Open Heavens*
Our Redemption
Receiving God's Guidance
Revivals, Visitations and Moves of God
Shhh! No Gossip!
Speak Your Faith *
The Conquest of the Mind
The Father's Love
The House of God
The Kingdom of God
The Mighty Name of Jesus *
The Night Seasons of Life
The Power of Commitment*
The Presence of God
The Redemptive Heart of God
The Refiner's Fire
The Spirit of Wisdom, Revelation and Power*
The Wonderful Benefits of speaking in Tongues
Timeless Principles for the Workplace
Understanding the Prophetic
Water Baptism
We Are Different*
Who We Are in Christ
Women in the Workplace
Work Its Original Design

PDF versions of all the above books are available for free download from our church website at **apcwo.org/books**. Many of these books are also available in other languages. To request your free copy of these books, please send an email to **bookrequest@apcwo.org**
*Available only as PDF

Also visit our church website for free Audio and Video sermons, Sermon notes (**apcwo.org/sermons**), and many other resources you can use.

Attend A Weekend School

Weekend Schools, held in Bangalore, are geared to train and equip believers in specific areas of life and ministry. These are conveniently held on a Saturday 9am-6pm. Weekend schools are open to all believers from all churches and across denominations, who are interested in being trained and equipped. Below is a list of weekend schools that are currently being hosted.

Weekend School of Prophetic Ministry
Weekend School of Healing and Deliverance
Weekend School on Gifts of the Spirit
Weekend School of Prayer and Intercession
Weekend School on Inner Wholeness
Weekend School on Lifestyle Evangelism
Weekend School on God@Work
Weekend School of Urban Missions and Church Planting
Weekend School on Christian Apologetics

Please visit: **apcwo.org/weekendschool** for current schedule and to register online

Host A Christian Leaders Conference

All Peoples Church provides Spirit anointed equipping and impartation for pastors, local church leadership, leaders of Christian organizations and others engaging in Christian ministry. In addition to anointed teaching, Spirit-led ministry and impartation, our teams engage in personal interaction and discussions with participants. Each Christian Leaders' Conference runs typically for 2 to 3 days focused on a specific theme. Participants will leave renewed, empowered, and equipped for greater impact and effectiveness in their ministry. Christian Leaders Conferences are typically hosted by a local church, a Christian ministry, a mission organization or denominational head-office for churches and pastors in its area or within its network or denomination. The hosting organization will cover the expenses of the conference as well as inviting participants. All Peoples Church will send its ministry team to serve the participants at the Christian Leaders Conference.

Some of the themes that our teams commonly minister on:

- **Revivals, Visitations and Moves of God**
- **Presence and Glory**
- **Kingdom Builders** (The Kingdom of God and Kingdom Building)
- **Level Ground**
- **The House of God**
- **Apostolic and Prophetic Ministry**
- **Ministering Healing and Deliverance**
- **Gifts of the Spirit**
- **Marriage and Family**
- **Equipping the Saints and Marketplace Transformation**

For additional details and a current listing of themes for Christian Leaders Conference, please visit:
apcwo.org/CLC

To schedule and plan a Christian Leaders Conference please email us at: contact@apcwo.org

ABOUT ALL PEOPLES CHURCH

At All Peoples Church (APC), our vision is to be salt and light in the city of Bangalore and a voice to the nation of India and to the nations of the world.

At APC, we are committed to presenting the complete, uncompromised Word of God in the anointing and demonstration of His Holy Spirit. We believe that good music, creative presentations, brilliant apologetics, contemporary ministry techniques, latest technology and so on, can never substitute the God-ordained approach of proclaiming the Word in the power of the Holy Spirit with signs, wonders, miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:4-5; Hebrews 2:3-4). Our theme is Jesus, our content is the Word, our method is Holy Spirit power, our passion is people, and our goal is Christlike maturity.

With our main base in Bangalore, All Peoples Church has several other church locations in India. To get a current listing and contact information of All Peoples Church locations, please visit our website at www.apcwo.org/locations or send an email to **contact@apcwo.org**.

DO YOU KNOW THE GOD WHO LOVES YOU?

About 2000 years ago, God came into this world as a man. His name is Jesus. He lived a perfectly sinless life. Since Jesus was God in flesh, everything He said and did revealed God to us. The words He spoke were the very words of God. The things He did were the actions of God. Jesus did many miracles on the Earth. He healed the sick and suffering. He opened blind eyes, unstopped deaf ears, made the lame to walk and healed every kind of sickness and disease. He fed the hungry by miraculously multiplying a few loaves of bread, calmed the storm and did many other wonderful things.

All of these actions reveal to us that God is a good God who wants people to be well, whole, healthy, and happy. God wants to meet the needs of people.

So why then would God decide to become a man and step into our world? Why did Jesus come?

All of us have sinned and done things that are unacceptable before the God who created us. Sin has its consequences. Sin is like a great unsurpassable wall between God and us. Sin separates us from God. It prevents us from knowing and having a meaningful relationship with the One who created us. Therefore, many of us try to fill this void with other things.

Another consequence of our sins is eternal separation from God. In God's court, the penalty for sin is death. Death is eternal separation from God in hell.

But the good news is that we can be free from sin and be restored to God. The Bible says, **"For the wages [payment] of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23).** Jesus paid for the sins of the whole world when He died on the cross. Then, three days later He rose again, showed Himself alive to many and then went back into heaven."

God is a God of love and mercy. He does not wish that any person be lost in hell. And so He came, to provide a way for the entire human race to be free from sin and its lasting consequences. He came to save sinners—to rescue people like you and me from sin and eternal death.

To receive this free forgiveness of sins, the Bible tells us that we have to do just one thing—accept what the Lord Jesus Christ did on the cross and to believe in Him whole-heartedly.

"… through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive forgiveness of sins" (Acts 10:43).

“That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved” (Romans 10:9).

You too can receive forgiveness and cleansing for your sins if you will believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The following is a simple prayer to help you make a decision to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and what He has done for you on the cross. This prayer will help you express your acceptance of what Jesus has done for you and receive forgiveness and cleansing for your sins. This prayer is only a guideline. You can also pray in your own words.

Dear Lord Jesus, today, I have understood what You did for me on the cross. You died for me, You shed Your precious blood and paid the penalty for my sins, so that I could be forgiven. The Bible tells me that whoever believes in You will receive forgiveness for their sins.

Today, I make a decision to believe in You and to accept what You did for me, by dying for me on the cross and rising again from the dead. I know I cannot save myself by my own good works, neither can any other human save me. I cannot earn forgiveness for my sins.

Today, I believe in my heart and say with my mouth that You died for me, You paid the penalty for my sins, You rose again from the dead, and by faith in You, I receive forgiveness and cleansing for my sins..

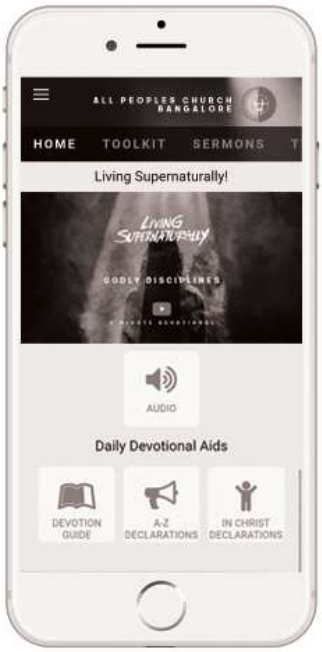
Thank You Jesus. Help me to love You, to know You more and to be faithful to You. Amen.

DOWNLOAD THE FREE APP!

Search for
"All Peoples Church Bangalore"
in the App or Google play stores.

Available on the App Store

ANDROID APP ON Google play



A daily 5-minute video devotional.
A daily Bible reading and prayer guide.
5-minute Sermon summary.
Toolkit with Scriptures on various topics to build faith and information to share the Gospel.
Resources with sermons, sermon notes, TV programs, books, music and more.

IF YOU LOVE IT, TELL OTHERS ABOUT IT!

All Peoples Church Bible College
apcbiblecollege.org

All Peoples Church Bible College and Ministry Training Center (APC-BC), in Bangalore, India, provides Spirit-filled, anointed, hands-on training and equipping for ministering in the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit along with doctrinally sound and intellectually stimulating study of God's Word. We believe in developing the whole person for ministry emphasizing godly character, deep roots in the Word of God, and powerful demonstrations of signs, wonders, and miracles—all flowing out of an intimate relationship with the Lord.

At APC-BC in addition to sound teaching we emphasize the love of God in demonstration, the anointing and presence of the Holy Spirit and the supernatural work of God. Several young men and women have been trained and sent out to fulfill God's call over their lives.

We offer three programs:

- One-year Certificate in Theology and Christian Ministry (C.Th.)
- Two-year Diploma in Theology and Christian Ministry (Dip.Th.)
- Three-year Bachelor's in Theology and Christian Ministry (B.Th.)

Classes are held each weekday, **Monday to Friday from 9:00am-1pm**. Day scholars, working professionals, and homemakers can attend these classes and continue with their workday after 1pm. Separate hostel facilities are available for men and women who desire to be residential students. Students participate in field work, special seminars, prayer and worship times in the afternoon sessions, each weekday from 2pm-5pm. The afternoon sessions are optional for day scholars (non-residential students). All students are encouraged to serve at one or more local churches over the weekends.

To **apply online**, and for more information about the college, curriculum, eligibility criteria, tuition costs and to download the application form, please visit: **apcbiblecollege.org**

APC-BC is accredited by the Nations Association for Theological Accreditation (NATA).

If there is one thing absolutely necessary in Christian Ministry today, it is the developing of a Christian mindset. God has not called us to build our own ministries, or even our own churches. He has called us to build His Kingdom!

Discover what it is to be a co-worker with God. Develop the heart of a Kingdom builder.

Understand how God takes each one of us to fulfill His visions and dreams for Kingdom expansion.

Kingdom building is about building people! Learn how to build people by the Spirit.

Dreams and visions in God's Kingdom are interlinked. Learn how to partner in Kingdom building.

If we all work as Kingdom builders, we will see a radical shift in the spiritual dynamics within the Body of Christ in any city, region, and nation.

Ashish Raichur

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